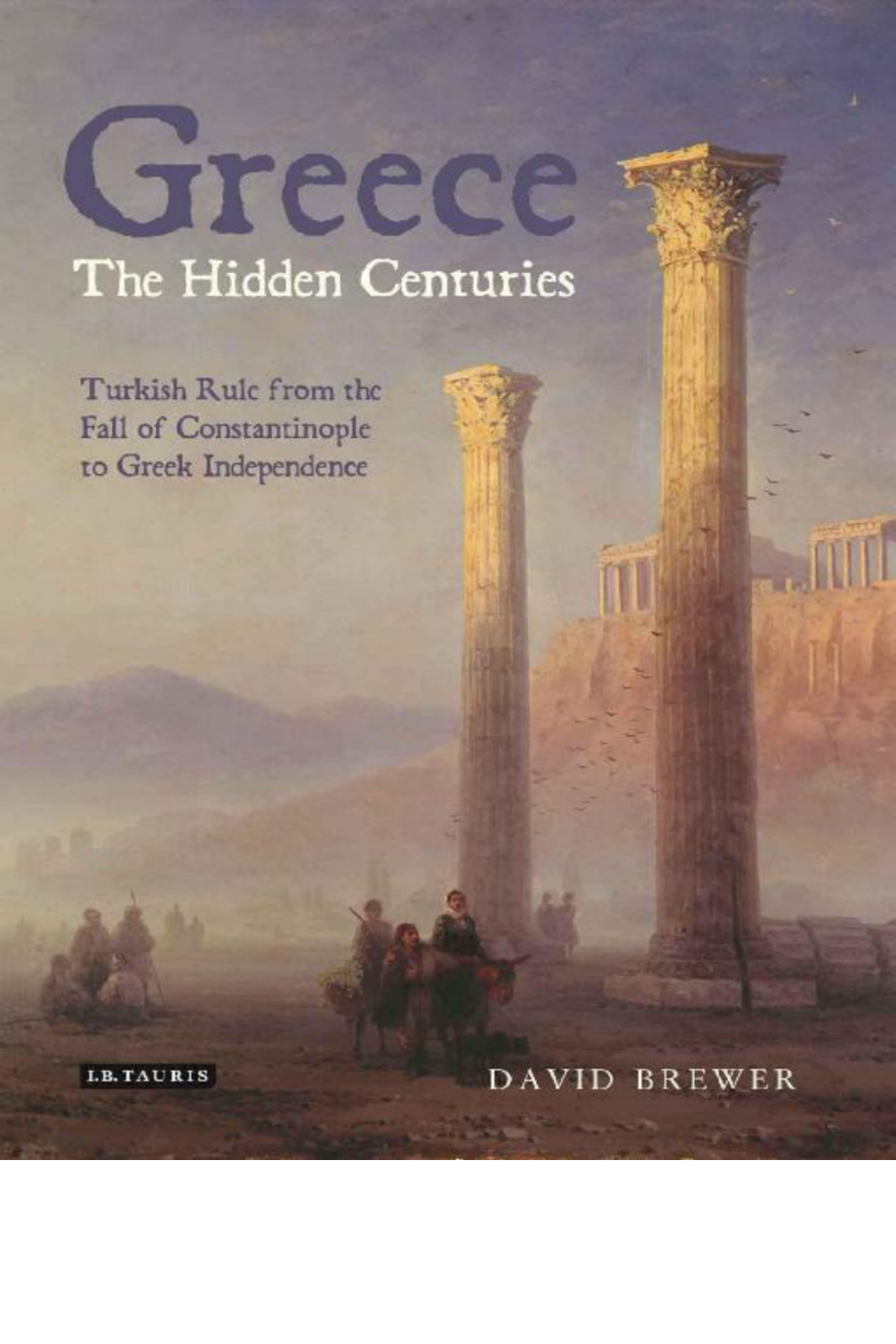


Greece, the Hidden Centuries

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The Hidden Centuries

Turkish Rule from the
Fall of Constantinople
to Greek Independence

I.B. TAURIS

DAVID BREWER

Greece, the Hidden Centuries

David Brewer is the author of *The Flame of Freedom: The Greek War of Independence, 1821-1833*. After studying Classics at Oxford University he divided his working life between teaching, journalism and business before devoting himself to the study of the history of Greece.

PRAISE FOR *THE FLAME OF FREEDOM*

‘fascinating . . . Brewer has done a splendid and useful job for which he is to be warmly congratulated’

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‘remarkably detailed and highly readable’

Dominick Coyle, *Financial Times*

‘*The Flame of Freedom* makes terrific reading, as thrilling as a good novel’

Roderick Beaton, *Times Literary Supplement*

GREECE,
THE HIDDEN CENTURIES

Turkish Rule
from the Fall of Constantinople
to Greek Independence

David Brewer

I.B. TAURIS

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For Elisabeth

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I have explored some of this book's issues in articles for *Athens News*, and I am very grateful to the paper's editor John Psaropoulos for the opportunity to do so.

I recently read an Acknowledgements in which the writer's teachers were thanked, and it struck me that more of us should do that. So I would like to remember, with gratitude and affection, Meston Batchelor, who first taught me Ancient Greek and later shared a keen interest in the Greece of today; to Herbert Brown, who opened my eyes to the scale and excitement of history; and to Eirlys Roberts, who edited my first journalism with an encouraging smile and a steely insistence on clarity and accuracy.

My family has been involved in the writing of this book from the start, and I really appreciate the generous encouragement of my daughters and of my step-children. But my greatest debt and biggest thank-you is to my wife Elisabeth. P.G. Wodehouse once light-heartedly dedicated a book to his wife, without whose constant help and encouragement, he wrote, this book would have been finished in half the time. I can genuinely say the reverse. Without Elisabeth's perceptive comments, encouragement, love and support this book would not have been finished at all. It would probably not even have been started without her painstaking conversion of my handwritten and much-amended drafts into a respectable text. It is her book too, and I am delighted

to dedicate it to her.

Notes on Pronunciation and Names

Pronunciation

Greek names can be an irritant or even a barrier to a reader who is not sure how to pronounce them. Stress often falls in unexpected places, so has been marked, but pronunciation of Greek is relatively straightforward because, unlike in English, each letter or combination of letters is always pronounced in the same way. In the transliteration of Greek used here, the vowel sounds are:

a as in basket

e as in bed

i as in the first i in blini

o as in box – even at the end of a word

ou as in boot

The only unusual consonant sounds are:

ch as in loch

dh a soft th as in then – but

th a hard th as in thin

Names

Anglicised versions have been used for the better-known place names – Athens, Corinth, Hydra (not Ídhra) – and personal names – Alexander and, a bit of a hybrid, Georgios rather than Yeóryios or George. For Greek names of the Byzantine era the more familiar anglicised versions are generally used – Isaac, Palaiologos and so on. Thereafter Greek names are transliterated.

All translations are by the author unless otherwise indicated.

The Greeks consider themselves to have been ruled by Turks rather than by Ottomans, so ‘Turks’ is used throughout unless the reference is to the wider Ottoman Empire, as for example in Chapter 14. Strictly speaking, Turks were originally only the Turkish-speaking people of Anatolia, often despised as uncouth, and Turkey did not become the official name of the country until 1923.

Similarly the Greeks continued to refer to Constantinople rather than Istanbul, so ‘Constantinople’ is used throughout, even for the centuries after 1453. Istanbul was not formally adopted as the city’s name until 1930.

Until about 1800 the Balkans meant only a range of mountains in Bulgaria, but is used here in its modern sense of the whole Balkan peninsula. That peninsula was formerly known as the Ottoman province of Roumeli, but ‘Roumeli’ is here restricted, as in Greek usage, to Greece north of the Gulf of

Corinth.

I am going to tell you a great tale, and if you will listen to me I hope that it will please you.

The Chronicle of Morea, opening
lines

Prologue

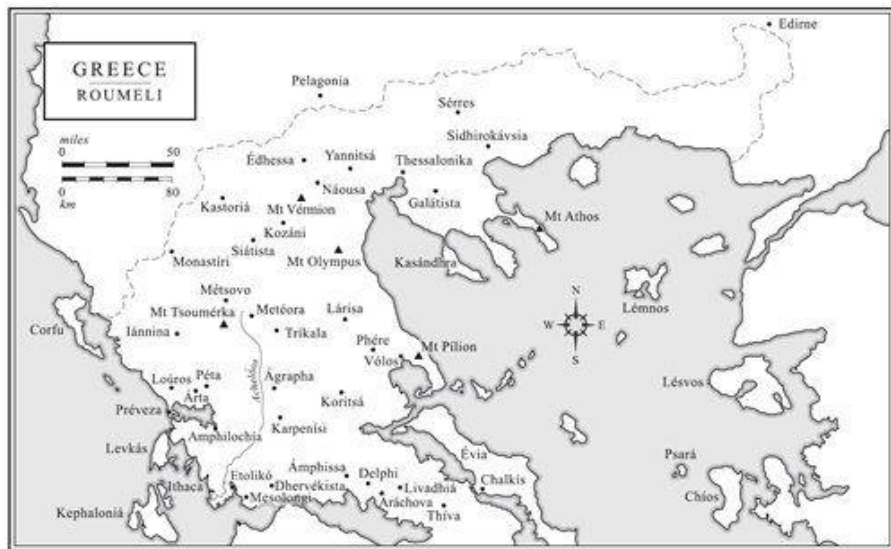
The Greek View of Turkish Rule

In the spring of 1705 a Turkish official arrived in the northern Greek town of Náousa, sent by the governor of Thessalonika. The official's duty was to collect 50 Greek youths for service at the Sultan's court or in the elite Ottoman army units, the janissaries. The youths were to be under twenty years old and, said the official's orders, to be 'graceful and well-bodied'. This was the procedure called *devshirme* by the Turks and *pedhomázoma* or child-collection by the Greeks. Sometimes youths volunteered for this service or were put forward by their families, but most were simply selected and marched away, conscripted rather than recruited.

On this occasion there were violent protests. The Greeks of Náousa murdered the Turkish official and his two aides, shouting that they were not going to surrender their sons. A gang of over 100 Greeks was formed, partly of brigands and partly of the Greek militia appointed by the Turks to control the brigands, and this gang proceeded to rob and murder Turks. Náousa was an ideal area for mountain-based brigands, as the town sits below Mt Vémion, and within a few miles the ground has risen to over 1,500 feet, with the 6,500-foot summit only six miles away.

It took a force of 800 Turks to surround the rebels and defeat them in 'a mighty and furious battle'. The leader of the rebels was killed in the fighting and eight others were captured and brought in chains before a special court. Defiant to the last, they were sentenced to death by hanging, and their severed heads were paraded through Náousa and then taken to the governor's palace in Thessalonika.¹

This *devshirme* was one of the last in Greece, perhaps the very last, but for Greeks the memory of the *devshirme* has never died. The events of 1705 contain all the elements that for centuries to come made Greeks hate Turkish rule and hate the Turks: the forcible removal of Greek boys who were the best of their generation, the heroic Greek resistance and the brutal Turkish retribution.



The Greeks found many other reasons to condemn their 400 years or so of Turkish rule, the *Tourkokratía*, which is commonly reckoned to have lasted from the Turkish capture of Constantinople in 1453 until the formal recognition of Greek independence in 1833. In many Greek histories of the period the Greeks under Turkish rule are described as enslaved – *ipódhouli*, or *en dhoulía*. According to such accounts the Greeks were under constant pressure to abandon their Christian Orthodox religion and convert to Islam, and were not allowed to build churches. To keep the Greek language alive they had to educate their children secretly. Any protest or revolt was ruthlessly suppressed. Heavy taxation made their lives miserable. It is claimed

that the *Tourkokratía* cut Greece off from the artistic developments of the Renaissance and the intellectual developments of the Enlightenment. Furthermore the Turks in 400 years failed to bring any improvements to Greece and left nothing of value behind them. By the last years of the *Tourkokratía* the people of the former or remaining Turkish possessions blamed the Turks for all their country's ills. As a nineteenth-century traveller in the Balkans wrote: 'Every misfortune is attributable to the Turks, and we hear so often that they are tyrants and oppressors that the people generally believe they are so.'² On this view, the centuries of Turkish rule were indeed dark as well as largely hidden.

However, this picture is far from being completely accurate. For instance, there was no pressure on Greeks to convert to Islam. The Greeks, like other Christians in the Ottoman Empire, were left completely free to practise their religion, and such conversions as happened were for some personal advantage. Church building was in fact allowed, provided that the Turkish government gave permission; this permission was generally granted if the new church was to be in a mainly Christian area and not close to a Muslim mosque. Thus by the eighteenth century there were some 40 Greek churches in Constantinople itself, only three of which had been built before the Turkish conquest of the city. And since the Greek Church was given complete responsibility for Greek education there was no need for it to be clandestine. Secret schools are a myth.

The Turks were not the only foreign rulers in Greece during the so-called *Tourkokratía*. Until the mid-sixteenth century – a century after the fall of Constantinople – the Venetians ruled Cyprus, the Genoese held Chíos, and the crusading order of the Knights of St John occupied Rhodes, each in turn giving way to Turkish rule. It was another century still before Venice lost Crete to the Turks, a possession it had originally acquired in 1204 in the aftermath of the Fourth Crusade.

In Crete, therefore, Venetian rule or *Enetokratía* lasted as long as *Tourkokratía* elsewhere. How did the two regimes differ? The Venetians were as harsh as the Turks in suppressing revolts, which punctuated the early period of Venetian rule: by one reckoning, there were 27 different uprisings in two centuries. Though the Catholic Venetians were generally tolerant of the Greek Church, they were more interventionist than the Turks, banning Orthodox bishops. Venetian taxation was at least as heavy as Turkish, and as much resented. In the final struggle for control of Crete many Cretans supported the Turks as preferable to the Venetians. One might expect that the *Enetokratía* would be remembered with as much bitterness as the *Tourkokratía*. But it is not.

The reasons are fairly obvious. After its loss of Crete in 1669, Venice briefly acquired control of the Peloponnese, but in 1715 the Turks drove the Venetians out of mainland Greece. Venice's only remaining Greek possessions were the Ionian islands, until she lost those too, and her own

autonomy, to Napoleon in 1797. So when Greek independence was established in 1833 Venice, in terminal decline, had not been a threat to Greece for over a century.

With Turkey, Greece's relations were very different. In 1833 the territory of the new Greek state extended to a line only 100 miles or so north of the Gulf of Corinth, giving it a long land border with the old enemy. As Greece expanded northwards this dangerous trip-wire of conflict remained, and is there to this day along the 100-mile Greek–Turkish border in eastern Thrace. In the Aegean too a wavy and sometimes disputed line separates Greek from Turkish territory, and Greece's most eastern islands of Lésvos, Chíos, Sámos and Kos are only a few miles from the Turkish mainland. Unlike Venice, Turkey remained an ever-present shadow over Greece and a major force in Greek and indeed European affairs.

If Turkey threatened Greece, Greece in turn threatened Turkey, through the promulgation, only a few years after Greek independence, of the so-called *Megáli Idhéa* or Great Idea. This was the proposal that the Greek state should be extended to include all Greeks, not just the minority who lived in the Greek kingdom, and that its capital should again be Constantinople once the Turks were driven out. In 1844 the Great Idea was articulated in the Greek parliament by the leading politician of the day Iánnis Koléttis. 'The Kingdom of Greece', said Koléttis, 'is not Greece. Greece constitutes only one part, the smallest and poorest. A Greek is not only a man who lives within this kingdom but also one who lives in any land associated with Greek history or the Greek race. There are two main centres of Hellenism: Athens, the capital of the Greek kingdom, and Constantinople, the dream and hope of all Greeks.'

His meaning was clear. As Palmerston commented, Koléttis' leading objective was obviously 'aggression towards Turkey'. The Great Idea became practically an article of faith with Greek politicians and to hate the Turks became an important part of being a Greek, an attitude fostered in education from primary school to university. In 1922 the attempt to realise the Great Idea by invading Turkey and perhaps eventually seizing Constantinople led to disaster – but no lessening of the antagonism. From 1974, when Turkey occupied northern Cyprus, Greece's annual defence review regularly named Turkey as the foremost threat – to be replaced only in 2005 by international terrorism.

All this suggests that Greek bitterness about past rulers largely depends upon what happened after that rule ended, and has rather less to do with the nature of the rule itself. On what basis then can one make judgements about Turkish and about Venetian rule as they actually were?

It might seem that there is only one judgement to be made, and that is condemnation. As we have seen, Greek historians often equate Turkish rule with slavery. Slavery, they imply, is ipso facto totally pernicious, so if foreign rule is the same as slavery all foreign rule is equally bad, and there is no more to be said.

The Greeks are not, of course, the only people to characterise foreign occupation as slavery. The British have been singing 'Britons never, never, never shall be slaves' from its first appearance in a masque in 1740 to the lusty performances nowadays at the Albert Hall in September every year. These ringing words and their enthusiastic reception were not originally prompted by any immediate danger of invasion. By 1740 it was over 70 years since the Dutch attack on Chatham in 1667, and nearly 50 since the French attempt to restore the exiled James II in 1692, while the Napoleonic threat was 50 years in the future. The resolute refrain declared resistance to foreign intervention from any quarter at any time. For the British, as for the Greeks, to be ruled by foreigners would be slavery.

But the Greeks under the Turks were not literally slaves. Nobody pretends that all Greeks were the property of Turkish masters who could buy and sell them. Slavery is being used metaphorically to mean restriction of liberty. So the way is open for an examination of how far the rulers in fact restricted liberty, what other impositions they made, and on the other side what can be counted as benefit to the ruled. That examination is the purpose of this book.

To reassess a long-cherished national belief can be a painful business. We can all perhaps imagine how we would react to the thesis that one of our own nation's finest hours was not fine at all, or that one of our darker eras had its compensations: an angry refusal to look at the evidence, and an immediate assumption, not just that the thesis is not true, but that it could not possibly be true.

There is an example of the difficulty of abandoning myths from another nation's history. In the new state of Israel it was universally believed that the Jews who in AD 70 died on the hilltop of Masada resisting the Romans were patriotic heroes. 'Masada shall not fall again' became a slogan of the young embattled nation. However, the Israeli historian Nachman Ben-Yehuda came across a paper, by an American writer, which maintained that the Jews on Masada were in fact murderous thugs, who had killed many fellow Jews. Ben-Yehuda indignantly rejected the idea, but went to his library to check. 'To make a long story and a painful weekend short,' he wrote, 'on Saturday night I knew that the paper was right and I was wrong.'

To say of some long-held belief that it is a myth is not to say, scornfully, that it is rubbish. Myths have power for ill or for good. Myths can lead to the excesses of fanaticism, but can also nurture and sustain a people in dire adversity. Many Greeks will doubtless be deeply upset by this book's questioning of some of their ideas about the history of the *Tourkokratía* and I apologise for causing that distress, which I believe I can understand. Nevertheless the story, as accurately and truthfully as possible, should be told. As the historian Gaetano Salvemini said, 'Impartiality is a dream, honesty is a duty.'

The story is often presented, especially in older Greek histories of the period, as one simply about Greeks and Turks. The scene is a sealed stage

with just two actors, or perhaps an enclosed arena with only two antagonists. But there is more to the story than that.

Once the Ottoman Empire had taken Constantinople in 1453 and established its rule in south and east Europe, it became a major player in Europe's affairs through trade, diplomacy, sometimes alliances, but most significantly through conflicts. The following centuries were punctuated by Ottoman clashes with Venetians, Habsburgs, combinations of European powers known as Holy Leagues, and latterly with Russia. Success or failure strengthened or weakened the Ottoman Empire, and affected immediately, or in the longer term altered, Ottoman relations with its subject people, including the Greeks.

Five such conflicts were turning points, one, as it happens, in each century. The first was the Ottoman capture of Constantinople in 1453, marking the end of the Byzantine Empire and the beginning of Ottoman expansion into Europe on a large scale. The next was the Ottoman defeat in the naval battle of Lepanto in 1571. This ended the assumption of Ottoman invincibility at sea, and arguably began the long process of Ottoman decline. But a century later, in 1669, the Ottomans were still strong enough to take Crete from the Venetians, bringing many thousands of Greeks under Turkish rule. In 1770 Greeks rebelled briefly and unsuccessfully against Turkish rule. This was the so-called Orlov revolt, inspired by Catherine the Great as part of Russia's expansionist plans and named for its leader and one of Catherine's many lovers, Count Theodore Orlov. Finally, in 1821 the Greek war of independence began, leading twelve years later to the establishment of Greece as an independent nation state.

To understand the impact on Greece of the first great upheaval in 1453 we need to look at conditions in Greece that preceded it. What changes, for better or worse, did Ottoman rule bring? Greece before the arrival of the Ottomans is the subject of the chapter that follows.

Greece Before the Turks

The Fourth Crusade, summoned in 1198 by the new Pope Innocent III, was not originally intended to go anywhere near Constantinople. The Pope called for a crusade to recapture the Holy Land, then in the hands of Saladin, and to reverse, as he put it, ‘the deplorable invasion of that land on which the feet of Christ stood’.¹

Those who responded were mainly French and Italian, led by their nobility. Their plan was to travel to the Holy Land by sea, and first to establish a secure base by annexing Egypt. The keys to Jerusalem, it was said, were to be found in Cairo. So the crusaders needed a fleet and contracted with Venice to build one for them.

The fleet was huge, some 250 ships, and the cost of the ships and their supplies correspondingly enormous: 85,000 marks, about twice the annual income of the King of England or France. The Venetians also demanded that ‘so long as our association lasts we shall have one half, and you the other half, of everything that we win, either by land or sea,’ and these terms were confirmed by treaty.²

But when the fleet was ready to sail, in the summer of 1202, the crusaders could not pay – they were about a third short of the price that had been fixed. The Venetians therefore agreed to postpone full payment if the crusaders and their fleet would first recapture for Venice the town of Zara, modern Zadar, on the Dalmatian coast, which Venice had recently lost to Hungary. On 12 November 1202 Zara fell to the crusaders, and as it was too late in the season to sail on, the crusaders were stuck there until the following spring.

During this enforced wait there was another twist to the course of the crusade. Alexios was the twenty-year-old son of the recently deposed and imprisoned Byzantine Emperor, Isaac II. Alexios now arrived in Zara and made the crusaders an offer. If they would place his father on his rightful throne and ensure his own succession, he would pay them, from the riches of Constantinople, the money they owed the Venetians. This offer was satisfactory for everybody. The Venetians would get their money, the crusaders would be relieved of their debt, and Alexios would get his throne. It also had a benefit for Innocent III. A Byzantine Emperor who owed his throne to the crusade that the Pope had inspired would be more likely to support the Pope’s long-term objective: the reunification of the Western and Eastern

Churches, and the reassertion of papal authority in the Byzantine Empire.

In June 1203 the crusaders reached Constantinople, and within a month had overcome Byzantine resistance by breaching the walls to the north of the city along the Golden Horn. Alexios and his father Isaac were installed as co-emperors. But Alexios was unable to raise the money to pay the crusaders. The populace resisted his new taxes, and his seizure of Church plate to be melted down infuriated the clergy, while the citizens of Constantinople loathed the often violent and drunken crusaders. By January 1204 Alexios and Isaac had been deposed, Isaac was dead and Alexios had fled the city. The new Emperor, another Alexios known as Mourtzouphlos, was committed to resisting all the crusader demands and the crusaders' only course now was to take the city themselves.

A detailed plan was therefore drawn up for the division of offices and of territory in what was to become the Latin Byzantine Empire. A committee of six Venetians and six Frenchmen was to choose the Emperor, and the side that did not provide the Emperor would nominate the patriarch. The territory, both in Constantinople and outside, would be divided, with a quarter going to the new Latin Emperor and, as originally agreed, the remaining three quarters split equally between the Venetians and the non-Venetian crusaders. Any idea that the crusade would ever proceed to the Holy Land was abandoned.

On 12 April 1204 Constantinople fell to the crusaders and in the following three days the city was looted. The crusaders knew the value of Constantinople's treasures, and carried away all they could. The most spectacular part of the Venetian booty was the set of four horses of gilded copper, probably already a thousand years old, that were taken back to Venice and placed over the entrance to the basilica of St Mark's, where replicas still remain. The most significant trophies for many crusaders were the highly marketable holy relics, including two pieces of the True Cross, two of the nails that were driven through Christ's hands and feet, and His crown 'which was made of reeds, with thorns as sharp as the points of daggers'.³

Steven Runciman, in his classic 1950s account of the crusades, expressed the passionate feelings still harboured by many about the 1204 sack of Constantinople. 'There was never', he wrote, 'a greater crime against humanity than the Fourth Crusade.'⁴ Later historians, however, wonder if the sack was as dreadful as it has been represented. It was natural for Byzantine writers to describe the pillaging in the worst possible terms, and it is possible that some of the more lurid details of violent and sacrilegious destruction are simply black propaganda.

Some historians believe that the diversion of the Fourth Crusade was the result of a series of accidents. Others believe that each step was planned from the beginning by the influential Doge of Venice, the 90-year-old Enrico Dandolo, in pursuit of Venetian commercial advantage. The most likely explanation, lying somewhere between these two views, is that the course of events was determined by Dandolo's masterful administration of the

unforeseen.

However it came about, the seizure of Constantinople by the Fourth Crusade was a turning point for Europe. Though the crusaders' Latin Empire lasted only 50 years and Byzantine rulers returned to govern a diminished empire for another two centuries, Byzantium was no longer strong enough to resist the Ottoman invasion, which eventually took Constantinople in 1453. Moreover, the memory of the Fourth Crusade made any reconciliation between Catholic west and Orthodox east even more difficult. And for the Greeks the Fourth Crusade brought a radical upheaval – the division of the country between rival rulers.

Six major power centres now came to dominate the affairs of Greece, two from outside it and four within the country itself. As agreed before Constantinople fell, the committee of six Venetians and six Frenchmen elected the new Latin Emperor. Baldwin of Flanders was chosen, was crowned and anointed in a splendid ceremony in Ayía Sophía, and became the nominal overlord of all crusaders ruling in Greece. But the Byzantine ruling family, though it had lost its capital, was not finished. Theodore I Laskaris, who was related by marriage to the Angelos family, remained a rival Byzantine Emperor based in Nicaea, modern Iznik, only 60 miles south-east of Constantinople. These were the two power centres outside Greece.

There were four more, broadly speaking, in Greece itself. In the north, to the east of the Píndos mountains, was the so-called Kingdom of Thessalonika. This went to the crusader Boniface, from Montferrat in Piedmont, a disappointed candidate for the position of Latin Byzantine Emperor. Also in the north, to the west of the Píndos, was the Despotate of Ípiros. This was seized by the crusaders' one Greek rival in Greece: Michael, illegitimate but cousin of the Alexios who brought the crusaders to Constantinople. He styled himself Michael Angelos Komnenos, emphasising his link with the family that had provided the Byzantine Emperors in the previous century. Central Greece was dominated by the Lordship of Athens, later called a duchy, which remained in the hands of the de la Roche family from Burgundy for 100 years. Lastly, the Peloponnese in the south was ruled by the Villehardouin family from Champagne, who began the construction of the magnificent buildings of Mistrás.

Besides these six there were other less extensive but significant centres of influence. Venice, which had been allotted three eighths of the whole Byzantine Empire, was little interested in acquiring large territories needing substantial armies to defend and control them, and took only places useful for trade, in particular the harbour towns of Methóni and Koróni in the south-west Peloponnese. The one large Venetian acquisition of territory was Crete, originally allocated to Boniface. But Boniface was more concerned with his Kingdom of Thessalonika than with distant Crete, and immediately sold the island to Venice for a mere 1,000 marks – a tiny fraction of the 85,000 marks that Venice had charged for building the crusader fleet. Within a few years

other Venetian families were established in the islands of the Aegean.

This patchwork of possession did not last, and could hardly be expected to do so. These Franks from the western parts of Europe were not stable possessors of land in Greece as they might have been in their own countries, but became competitors in an intense and many-sided struggle for power. In 1224 the Despot of Ípiros took Thessalonika from Boniface's son and successor Dimitrios, only to lose the city 22 years later to the Byzantine Emperor in exile at Nicaea. In 1259 at the battle of Pelagonia these Byzantines defeated and captured Guillaume de Villehardouin, the ruler of the Peloponnese. Two years later the Byzantines of Nicaea achieved their greatest success, recapturing Constantinople and bringing the tottering Latin Empire to an end.

As time passed, other competitors appeared in Greece: Catalans, Neapolitans, Genoese, the Knights of St John, as well as the Turks. How did the Greeks fare in this territorial turmoil? How strongly did they resist their new rulers, and how far were they caught up in battles between them? Did the Catholicism of the occupiers supplant the Orthodoxy of the subject Greeks? And how did the common people of Greece live, in the countryside and in the towns?

We can find some answers to these questions by following the fortunes of one of the territories of Greece established after the fall of Constantinople to the crusaders in 1204 – the Peloponnese. Its story over the next two and a half centuries falls into three phases: first, half a century of stable rule by the crusading Villehardouin family; second, a century of conflict between the crusaders' successors and the restored Byzantine Empire; and third, a century of rule by the now enfeebled Byzantines, marked by constant attacks from outside.

The first phase began with the division of territory among the victorious crusaders. The Peloponnese, then and later known as the Morea, had originally been allocated to Venice, but a chance meeting determined otherwise. This meeting in 1205 was between two prominent crusaders, Guillaume de Champlitte and Geoffroy I de Villehardouin. De Villehardouin had already acquired some territory in the Peloponnese, and agreed with de Champlitte that together they would take over all of it. De Champlitte was to become the first Frankish overlord of the Peloponnese. Their meeting, it has been said, was to decide the history of Greece for the next two centuries.⁵

The crusaders had little difficulty in establishing themselves in the Peloponnese. Though the region had been allotted to Venice, the Venetians were interested only in the harbours of the Peloponnese and their commercial possibilities, and were satisfied with the southern ports of Methóni and Koróni. De Villehardouin and Champlitte fought only one major battle against the Greeks, in which it was claimed that 700 crusader troops decisively defeated 4,000 Greeks. Otherwise the crusaders were conciliatory as, being so few, they had to be. The Greeks, weary of conflicts between local warlords,

which their remote Byzantine rulers had become too weak to control, readily submitted. A chronicler reports de Villehardouin addressing an assembly of Greeks as ‘archons, friends and brothers and, henceforth, comrades’. He goes on to point out to them that ‘You do not have a lord to protect you,’ and ends by saying: ‘Therefore it seems to me better for you that we come to terms whereby murders, lootings and the taking of prisoners will not occur.’ The Greek landowners could keep their domains, with the accompanying privileges and obligations, while the crusaders took state and Church land, and it was promised that ‘the peasants of the villages would remain as the crusaders had found them.’⁶ There was indeed little point in resisting, and the Greeks submitted to the new rulers.

The chronicler mentioned above is the writer of the so-called *Chronicle of Morea*. There are eight versions of the material it contains, three in prose in French, Spanish or Italian, and five in verse in Greek, of which the earliest, written in about 1388 or possibly before, is considered the most authentic and is used here. All eight versions are probably derived from a French original, now lost, which was composed about 1310.

The *Chronicle of Morea* was designed either to be read or to be listened to. As its author says, ‘If you know letters, start reading; if, on the other hand, you are illiterate, sit down beside me and listen.’ It opens engagingly with the sentence that stands as the epigraph to this book: ‘I am going to tell you a great tale . . .’⁷ The chronicle has its weaknesses. It clearly favours the Franks. Some of its details are wrong. Its many long speeches by leaders cannot be verbatim records, but can reasonably be relied on to express the speaker’s policies. And, as a window on the actual conditions in the Peloponnese of those centuries, it is uniquely valuable.

The first half-century of crusader rule in the Peloponnese was something of a golden age. De Champlitte returned to France in 1208, where he died soon afterwards, and Geoffroy I de Villehardouin was recognised as overlord of the Peloponnese both by the Latin Emperor in Constantinople and by the Pope, with the title of Prince of Achaia. His rule lasted from 1208 to 1228, followed by those of his two sons Geoffroy II (1228–46) and Guillaume (1246–78). The conciliatory approach of Geoffroy I towards the Greeks was followed by his sons. Guillaume besieged Monemvasía, the precipitous fortress just off the south-east coast, for three years from 1245 to 1248; the town was ‘enclosed in exactly the same way as the nightingale by its cage’, says the chronicle.⁸ When it finally surrendered there was none of the bloody retribution common at the time and for centuries later. The people of Monemvasía were required in future only to provide boat services, for which they would be paid. Guillaume left the town’s three leading families in control, gave them a grant of land in the Mani, which may have been as rocky as their old home, and, if the chronicle is to be believed, ‘bestowed upon them gifts of horses and chargers, robes all of gold, and scarlet ones as well’.⁹

In the following year Guillaume began building the fortress of Mistrás, on a

commanding and easily defensible hilltop three miles from Sparta; Mistrás was to remain the administrative centre of the Peloponnese under different rulers until replaced by Tripolis in 1719. Guillaume and his barons brought out from France their existing families or new noble brides, and formed a highly cultivated circle, one of whose products was the splendidly illuminated *Manuscrit du Roi*, now in Paris. As a contemporary Spanish chronicler put it, 'one would say that the noblest knights of France were the knights of Morea, and the French spoken there was as fine as that of Paris.'¹⁰ But Guillaume was not a remote ruler cushioned in cultivated luxury. 'He was wont', wrote a contemporary, 'to send his most confidential advisers from time to time to the courts of his vassals, to see how they lived and how they treated their subjects.'¹¹ He also went out among his subjects himself, and as the chronicle puts it 'he went riding with his retinue and strolled among the villages near Monemvasía and the lands in that direction; with joy he went around and passed his time.'¹²

For the peasants among whom Guillaume de Villehardouin strolled so benignly, life went on under a continuing feudal system much as it had before. The twin sources of wealth had been, and remained, land and the labour to work it. To convert this wealth into military power, the ruler granted portions of land as fiefs to those who owed him allegiance, who in return had to provide military service. When Geoffroy I de Villehardouin came to allocate fiefs in the Peloponnese he set up a commission to do so, which included, besides himself and other Franks, five major Greek landowners. Twelve large fiefs were granted, with varying requirements for providing mounted knights and other troops when demanded.

Though some peasants were free, most of them were tied to labour on these fiefs. There seem to have been three categories of these unfree peasants: those with some land of their own, those without such a holding, both types having certain rights, and serfs, without property or virtually any rights at all.

The free peasant paid taxes to his lord, and unfree peasants above the level of serfs were also obliged to provide labour services to him, for which they must maintain a pair of oxen and an ass, and pass over to the lord a proportion of their crops. Both these groups had certain limited rights under the law. What was called low justice was administered by the fief-holder, and concerned payment of rents and other dues, and lesser civil cases. High justice, administered only by the holders of the major fiefs, covered important civil cases and criminal cases involving the death penalty.

Serfs, on the other hand, contributed to the fief-holder all their labour and produce apart from what was needed to exist. The serf was a chattel. His lord could take away all the serf's goods beyond the requirements of bare subsistence, a lord who killed a serf had only to replace him, a fugitive serf could be reclaimed wherever found, and a serf wronged by a lord could not take his case to any superior lord. It was a constrained and miserable existence indeed, though little different from the position of serfs in feudal societies

elsewhere in Europe.

The people of Greece were Orthodox and their new rulers Catholic, so one might have expected attempts to convert the Greeks, or at least conflicts between the two Churches. In fact neither happened except in a few isolated instances. Catholic archbishops and bishops were appointed, in the Peloponnese at Pátras, Corinth, Argos and at Venice's possessions of Methóni and Koróni, but they did little or nothing to spread Catholicism. They seem to have spent their time at their episcopal seats, and their energy on establishing their jurisdictions and keeping, or clawing back, their landholdings. They were competitors in the local power struggles rather than spiritual leaders. Meanwhile, little changed for the Greeks. Catholic priests in the countryside were virtually non-existent, and though this meant that the Greeks received little pastoral care except from an impoverished local priest, at least their religion was not under threat. The Catholic hierarchy did not regard the Greeks as heretics to be punished, but as schismatics who would one day rejoin the fold through the union of the Churches.

In the two and a half centuries of Frankish presence in Greece, territory was constantly taken over by rivals, sometimes as a result of a pitched battle. One of the most decisive was the battle of Pelagonia in July 1259 on one of the few plains in the mountainous far north-west of Greece, but which, remote as it was, ended the first phase of Frankish rule in the Peloponnese. It involved three of the major power centres in a contest for Thessalonika. The Kingdom of Thessalonika had changed hands several times since 1204, and since 1246 had been held by the Byzantines of Nicaea. Now the Despot of Ípiros, Michael II, aimed to seize Thessalonika, with the help of his ally Guillaume de Villehardouin, the ruler of the Peloponnese. Guillaume was married to the sister of Michael II of Ípiros, which should have cemented their alliance. Defending the territory of Thessalonika for the Byzantines was John Palaiologos, brother of the Byzantine Emperor in Nicaea.

In the middle of the night before the battle Michael of Ípiros and his army slipped away, apparently alarmed by the size of the opposing Byzantine forces, and left his ally Guillaume of the Peloponnese to face them. Guillaume's troops were routed, 'mown down like grass in a meadow', as the chronicle said.¹³ Guillaume himself was captured after trying to hide in a haystack. It was both the end of the first phase of the Peloponnese story, and the beginning of the end of Villehardouin rule in the peninsula.

The battle losses at Pelagonia were enormous, and it is recorded that the victorious Byzantines 'spent two days in burying the slain, and treating the uries of those who were wounded'.¹⁴ Relatively few of these casualties would have been Greeks; they were mainly the mercenaries hired by both sides. It was said that mercenaries were 'hired everywhere' by Guillaume and Michael of Ípiros, while the Byzantines are recorded as hiring 300 German cavalrymen, 3,500 archers from Hungary and the Cuman tribe from the Black Sea, and 600 mounted archers from Serbia, besides Bulgarians and even 500

Turks.¹⁵ Clearly victory depended upon the horse and the arrow, and of course the money to hire the men to use them.

So for most Greeks the battle itself would have been a remote and irrelevant clash of other men's arms. It was the looting before the battle and the pursuits after it that disrupted their lives. Guillaume and his troops had left the Peloponnese in high hopes during March of 1259, 'when the nightingales begin to warble and all creatures of the world rejoice and are renewed,' as the chronicler, who seems to have liked nightingales, poetically describes it.¹⁶ They crossed the Gulf of Corinth at the narrow part near Návpaktos, and joined forces with Michael of Ípiros. From then on they had to live off the land. Each day a large advance party – 1,000 horsemen and 3,000 foot soldiers – were sent ahead to collect plunder and to reassemble with their booty at nightfall. This procedure continued for the four months that it took the army to reach Pelagonia in July, with losses to the Greek peasantry that can only be guessed at. In the aftermath of the battle the victorious Byzantines pursued defeated fugitives as far as the Aegean coast 100 miles away, and went on to sack Thíva (ancient Thebes) before the end of the year. The towns of Greece suffered as well as the countryside.

However, pitched battles such as Pelagonia were not the only way in which territory in Greece was acquired. Marriage was another favoured route, and in histories of the period page after page features a dynastic marriage, whose intricacies require genealogical tables constantly to hand. Such marriages sealed alliances – though not always firmly, as the desertion of Guillaume de Villehardouin by his brother-in-law showed – and provided claims to territory. The marriages were often early and multiple. Guillaume's daughter Isabelle was married and widowed when barely out of her childhood, by one account when she was as young as fourteen. She later married two further husbands, bringing to each in turn the nominal title to her inheritance in the Peloponnese. Some of the titles acquired by marriage were indeed nominal, but many were real, or must have been expected to be so; otherwise the marriages would not have been so frequent. It has been well said that 'a sound pedigree and a good marriage allied to hope and a deep pocket' were what any claimant to lands in Greece required.¹⁷

The second phase of the Peloponnese story began in 1259, when Guillaume de Villehardouin was captured after defeat by the Byzantines of Nicaea. Two years later Guillaume was released and allowed back to the Peloponnese on the condition that he surrendered to the Byzantine Emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos his three main fortresses: Mistrás, Monemvasía and Maíña. The position of Maíña, also known as Great Mani, is disputed, but it was probably on the site of the ruin at Mézapos near the southern tip of the Mani.

The Byzantines, restored to Constantinople in 1261, were now in a stronger position. They were not content simply to hold these three fortresses, but used them as bases from which to regain the whole of the Peloponnese. Fierce clashes and high casualties followed. One woman was said to have been

married to seven husbands, one after the other, who were killed in this fighting. The Byzantines fought their way to full control of the Peloponnese, and by 1320 only three of the original twelve baronies remained in the hands of the Franks. A few years later the Byzantine Emperor John VI Kantakuzenos described the condition of the principality: 'The Peloponnese', he wrote, 'is completely ravaged, not only by the Turks who attack the country with powerful fleets, and by the Franks, but especially by the inhabitants themselves who are continually at war with each other, pillaging and murdering. The villages of the countryside, with no defence, are destroyed by enemies from outside, while the towns are the prey of the population; both will soon disappear completely.'¹⁸

John VI determined on decisive action, and this ushered in the third phase. He appointed his son Manuel as the first so-called Despot of the Morea, with a free hand to take all necessary measures. Manuel and his successors as despot were successful in imposing some order internally but were still at the mercy of intervention from outside, principally from the Turks. The last two despots ruled jointly, but uneasily, Thomas Palaiologos having the north-west half and his brother Dimitrios the south-east, including Mistrás, the long-term seat of government.

Despite the turmoil that the Peloponnese had suffered ever since the establishment of Mistrás in 1249, Mistrás had continued to be a cultural and intellectual centre. Its most distinguished citizen was Georgios Yemistós Plíthon, neo-Platonist philosopher, political theorist and friend of the future patriarch Yennádhios. Plíthon came to Mistrás from Constantinople in 1407 and remained there till his death in 1452, a witness to the last turbulent years of the Byzantine despots in the Peloponnese though not, by a year, to the end of the Byzantine Empire. It was neither the first nor the last period of history in which culture flourished while every other mark of civilisation was collapsing around it. In 1460, seven years after the fall of Constantinople to the Turks, the whole Peloponnese, except for Monemvasía and the Venetian towns, was conquered by Turkish forces and became a province of the Ottoman Empire.

The constant upheavals that plagued the Peloponnese between 1204 and the arrival of the Turks were replicated in the rest of the country. The Duchy of Athens in central Greece was under constant attack from neighbours or newcomers seeking to acquire territory. At the start of the fourteenth century the Catalan Grand Army, a force of mercenaries hired by the Byzantines, which was grand only in that it was formidable, arrived in Greece. In 1311, after a decisive battle, the Catalans seized control of the Duchy of Athens. Their methods were so appalling, even by the standards of the day, that the Pope excommunicated them as 'these senseless sons of damnation'.¹⁹ The Catalans gave way to the Acciaiuoli, originally a banking family in Naples who turned to politics and war, and who captured the Athens Akropolis in 1388. In 1456 they too yielded their possessions to the Turks.

In the north the two separate provinces, Ípiros and Thessalonika, were unified under the Byzantines after 1259, giving the combined territory access to the sea on both east and west along the old Roman Via Egnatia. Thessalonika, with its fine harbour and its position on the Via Egnatia, was the biggest commercial prize in Greece. It was besieged by the Catalans in 1308, governed by a chaotic commune in the 1340s at the time of the Black Death, occupied by the Turks for ten years at the end of the century, recovered by the Byzantines, ceded by them to Venice in 1423 in a vain bid for survival, and finally taken by the Turks in 1430.

The rule of the crusaders and their successors in Greece has been described as ‘a unique experiment in the conquest and settlement of lands which possessed their own rich cultural heritage’.²⁰ To call it an experiment is somewhat surprising. The Franks were not experimenting in the sense that they were trying a variety of solutions to their problems to see which worked best. They were imposing on their new territories the only system they knew: acquisition by war or by dynastic marriage, control by occupying or building fortresses, and exploitation by a feudal system similar to that in their homelands. For many and perhaps most Greeks, Frankish rule was in many ways like the Byzantine rule that had preceded it. With the arrival of the Turks another alien rule was imposed on Greece, one deriving from a different religion-based philosophy but as before not a complete break with the past. And Turkish rule brought, if nothing else, stability to the lands of Greece that had been fought over by competing forces for the previous two centuries.

1453 – The Fall of Constantinople

The fall of Constantinople to the Turks in 1453 was not the start of Turkish presence in Greece. Far from it. Turkish raids in the Aegean are recorded as early as 1303, and in the following decades Turkish ships attacked the islands of Santoríni, Kárpáthos, Éyina, and Évia. On the mainland they raided towns opposite Évia and in the north-east Peloponnese. The raiders were flotillas of individual corsairs, and their object was to take slaves: 20,000, it is said, in a single raid on Évia. Only the Venetians were powerful enough to challenge the Turks at sea, and Venice became in effect the protecting power of Greece against the Turkish corsairs.

By 1361 the Turks were on the threshold of today's Greece, having captured Adrianopolis, modern Edirne, within five miles of the present Greek–Turkish border. This otherwise insignificant town has the distinction of being the most frequently contested place in the world because of its position at the European end of the Europe–Asia land bridge. It has been fought over whenever military forces have moved from west to east, as the Romans did, or east to west as the Turks had now done. By one reckoning Edirne has been the scene of fifteen major battles or sieges over the centuries, of which the Turkish capture of 1361 was the twelfth. A few years later Edirne became the capital of the Ottoman Empire.

From Edirne the Turks moved west and then south through Greece. In 1391 they took Thessalonika from the Byzantines after a four-year siege. They then advanced south through Thessaly, capturing major towns, and within a few years were masters of Sálona, modern Ámphissa, and Livadhíá, only a few miles north of the Gulf of Corinth. Then came a check to Ottoman expansion. In 1402 the Turks were heavily defeated at Ankara by the forces of Tamerlane, and the Sultan was taken prisoner. In the next year the Byzantines recovered Thessalonika from the Turks, but the Turks took it again in 1430, and thereafter held it for nearly five centuries.

The Turks were now established in most of Greece, and indeed most of the Balkans. The lands of today's Bulgaria and Romania, as well as Albania, Bosnia and Serbia, were all Turkish vassal states, acknowledging Turkish supremacy and paying tribute. But the final bastion of the now shrunken Byzantine Empire remained unsubdued: Constantinople itself. The Turks had tried unsuccessfully to take the city in a seven-year siege in the 1390s, and

again in 1422. In the spring of 1453 Turkish forces appeared again outside the walls of Constantinople, the last barrier, symbolic as well as actual, to the total Ottoman domination of south-east Europe.

The Sultan commanding the Turkish forces was Mehmed II, later to be known as the Conqueror. He had first come to the throne in 1444 when he was perhaps as young as twelve, his father Murad II having abdicated in his favour. But within months his father was recalled to lead the Turks against a threatening army of Hungarians, Poles and Venetians, a command that the boy Mehmed was considered incapable of exercising. Two years later his father returned to the throne, an ignominious demotion for Mehmed. In 1451, on his father's death, Mehmed again became Sultan, now a young man with something to prove.

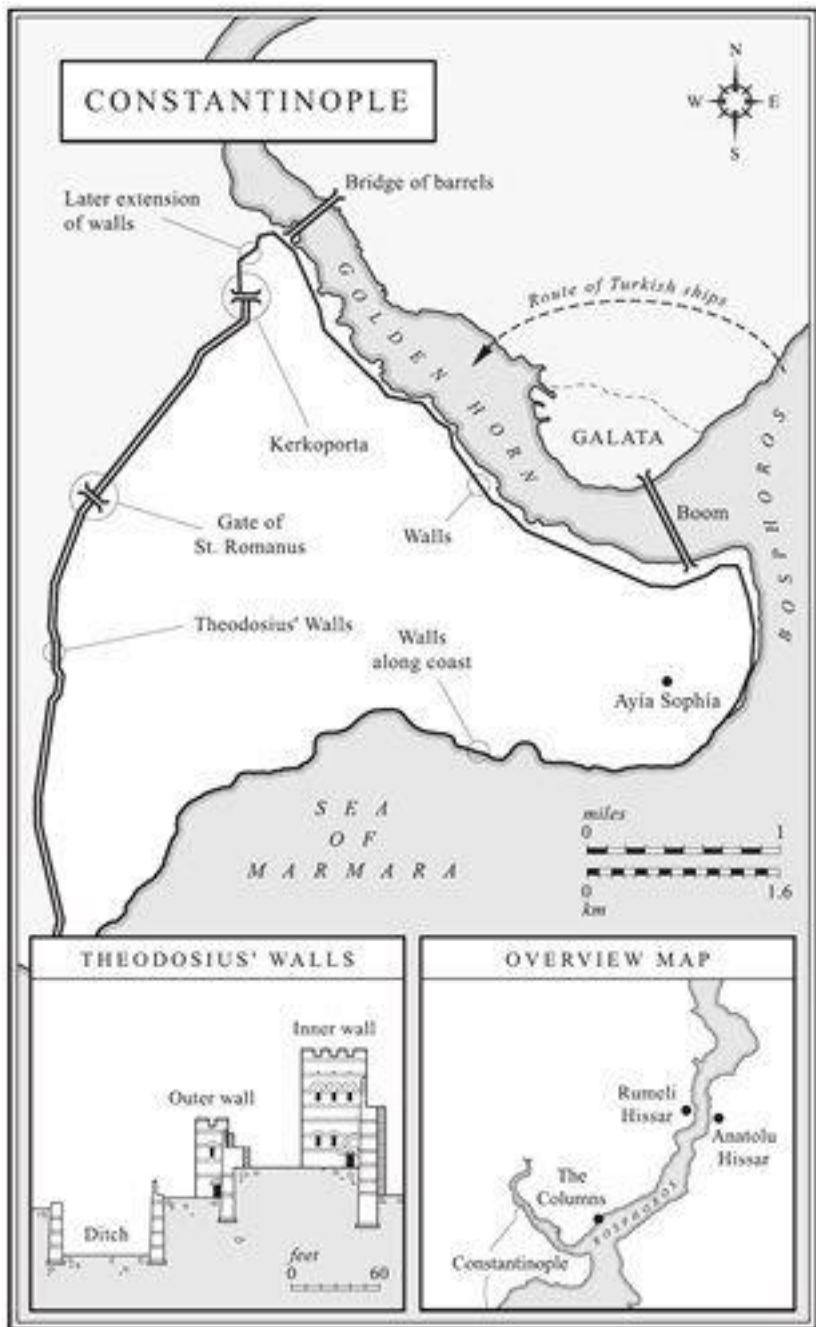
There could be no better proof of his abilities than the capture of Constantinople. In the last half-century two of his predecessors, one of them his father, had tried and failed. There were good reasons for bringing Constantinople under Turkish control: as long as Constantinople remained a Christian city it was a possible focus for a new crusade against the Turks, and possession of Constantinople would give the Turks control of all trade between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. There was a third but less obvious reason: the Turks had formidable land forces but no war fleet, only an assembly of individual corsairs. Constantinople would provide both ship-building facilities and a secure naval base, protected by the narrows of the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus, from which to achieve dominance at sea. Mehmed prepared himself well for this crucial venture. 'There is nothing', a contemporary Italian wrote, 'which he studies with greater pleasure and eagerness than the geography of the world, and the art of warfare. He shows great tenacity in all his undertakings, and bravery under all conditions. Such is the man, and so made, with whom we Christians have to deal.'¹

Constantinople by now retained little of its former possessions and wealth. The Byzantine Empire had been reduced to the Despotate of the Morea in the Peloponnese (though this was by now paying tribute to the Sultan), Trebizond on the south-east corner of the Black Sea and Constantinople itself with its immediate surroundings.

This diminished Byzantine Empire was effectively bankrupt. It was unable to collect most of the taxes from distant provinces so could not maintain the fleet and could barely pay its own troops, let alone mercenaries. Constantinople itself was in decay: a visitor in about 1400 wrote, 'Everywhere throughout the city there are many great palaces, churches and monasteries, but most of them are now in ruin.' Another visitor in the 1430s recorded that 'The city is sparsely populated. The inhabitants are not well clad, but sad and poor, showing the hardship of their lot which is however, not so bad as they deserve, for they are a vicious people, steeped in sin.'² This was the common explanation of disaster as divine punishment, which was to colour much of the thinking about Constantinople's eventual fall. Even the imperial regalia had

been sold off and replaced by cheap substitutes: the former gold and silver goblets were now of pewter or clay, gold embroidered cloth had become gilded leather and the jewels simply glass. Only in some of the churches were treasures still to be found.

The man at the head of this sad relic of former glories was the Emperor Constantine XI. He had experience as an administrator and as army commander when Despot of the Morea from 1443 jointly with his younger brother Thomas. He was widely respected for his integrity and tolerance, though some questioned his decisiveness. The Catholic archbishop of Lésvos, a Genoese known as Leonard of Chíos, was in Constantinople throughout the siege, and says of Constantine, ‘whom I always held in the greatest honour and respect’, that he ‘lacked firmness, and those who neglected to obey his orders were neither chastised nor put to death. That good man, so wickedly mocked by his own subjects, preferred to pretend that he did not see the wrongs that were being done.’³ In 1449, on the death of his father, Constantine left the Peloponnese in the hands of his two brothers Thomas and Dimitrios, and at the age of 44 became the Emperor Constantine XI.



The Turkish threat to his capital soon became clear. At the beginning of winter 1451 Mehmed II, within months of his accession, began preparations for building a castle, Rumeli Hissar, on the European side of the Bosphorus, opposite the fortress of Anadolu Hissar built 40 years earlier on the Asiatic side. Stone and timber were brought in from the east, limekilns to make

mortar were set up on the spot, and a huge number of workers was assembled, including 6,000 masons. Work was begun a few months later in March 1452, and completed by August. Now no ship could reach Constantinople from the north without Turkish permission, and in November a Venetian grain ship that tried to do so was sunk by the first cannon shot from the new fortress. Rumeli Hissar was aptly named, by both Turks and Greeks, the Throat-Cutter, blocking supplies to the beleaguered city.

Constantinople too made its preparations. The inhabitants of the surrounding area were brought into the city with their grain supplies. The Emperor sent officials to the Aegean islands to buy food and Chíos provided four shiploads of 'grain, wine, oil, figs, carobs, barley and all sorts of other crops'.⁴ Eight ships arrived from Crete loaded with malmsey, 'to give the means of life to the city'.⁵ Church vessels were melted down into coin to pay troops. The Golden Horn, the narrow inlet running roughly along the north side of the city, was closed off by a boom 'made of huge round pieces of wood, joined together with large nails of iron and thick iron links'.⁶

Another element of Constantine's preparations was an attempt to settle the divisive question of the union of the Greek Orthodox and Catholic Churches. The schism between Catholic west and Orthodox east had rumbled on for centuries. It was nominally about doctrinal issues, such as whether the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father alone, or from the Father *and* the Son – the famous *filioque* controversy. It was really about whether the Orthodox patriarch in Constantinople was or was not subject to the rule of the Pope in Rome. By now the question of the union of the Churches had become political as well as religious: union was the price Constantinople would have to pay for military help from the Catholic powers.

Fourteen years earlier the Byzantine Emperor John VIII Palaiologos, predecessor and elder brother of Constantine, had agreed at a council in Florence to pay this price. However, many Greeks in Constantinople and elsewhere passionately rejected this agreement, while others strongly supported it, and the union had still not been formally ratified by the Orthodox Church. Constantine, tolerant or indecisive according to one's viewpoint, was reported as saying that others could take the new way of union if they thought it better, though he himself preferred the old way.

But a decision could no longer be delayed. In November 1452, in response to Constantine's appeal to the Pope for help, the papal emissary Cardinal Isidore of Kiev, a Greek by birth, arrived in Constantinople to seal the union of the churches. He brought with him 200 men to help in the defence of the city, a token of the aid that acceptance of the union might bring. On 12 December, in a solemn service at the great church of Ayía Sophía, Cardinal Isidore read out the promulgation of the union to a packed congregation, from which the future patriarch Yennádhios and eight other staunch anti-unionists were pointedly absent. Isidore then celebrated the union liturgy, including the name of the Pope. But this historic ceremony achieved nothing. No further

help came from the Pope or the Catholic powers, and the Greeks were even more bitterly divided. Better the Turkish turban, said entrenched opponents of union, than the cardinal's hat.

The beleaguered city of Constantinople formed a triangular peninsula. The walls along the Golden Horn faced roughly north, the land walls at right-angles to these faced west, and a longer walled curve ran along the Sea of Marmora. The walls were pierced at intervals of a few hundred yards by strong gates. The whole perimeter was about thirteen miles long. Along the Marmora shore the walls rose almost straight out of the sea, and the Golden Horn was now closed by the boom, so the land walls were the most promising point of attack. First built by the Emperor Theodosius a thousand years before, and since reinforced and extended, they presented a formidable obstacle. Attackers, under continuous fire, would first have to cross a ditch some 60 feet wide, then get over a breastwork, cross an open space, climb the outer walls, cross another space and finally scale the inner walls, which were some 40 feet high with towers of about 60 feet. Before the invention of gunpowder these land walls were impregnable. Now they were the Sultan's main target.

The walls of Constantinople were exceptionally strong, but the Turkish cannon were exceptionally powerful. As well as their smaller cannon – as many as 10,000 by one estimate – there were two huge ones. These had been built by a Hungarian cannon founder called Urban, who had previously offered his services to the Byzantines but they could not pay him enough. The larger of Urban's cannon astonished all who saw it. Made of bronze and firing stone balls, its barrel was reputedly 26 feet long and its mouth over two feet across. Estimates of the weight of the balls varied wildly, from 150lb to 1,200lb, but given the size of the barrel and the density of stone a weight of around 500lb is likely. This monstrous machine was built and tested at Edirne, and then transported the 150 miles to Constantinople on 30 wagons drawn by 60 oxen and 400 men, accompanied by road-makers and bridge-builders. After a two-month journey it reached the walls of Constantinople at the end of March 1453.

The size of the Sultan's army was as impressive as the size and destructive power of his artillery. At the lowest estimate it totalled 200,000, made up of 60,000 fighting men, plus 140,000 others described as 'thieves, plunderers, hawkers, workmen and other camp followers'.⁷ A large part of them was drawn up along the land walls, and others were north of the Golden Horn behind the walled Genoese quarter of Galata, under the command of the Sultan's second vizier Zagan. Of the fighting men, 15,000 were elite janissaries, and the rest were cavalymen – though here they fought mostly on foot – archers with longbows or crossbows, and ordinary foot soldiers, of whom many were conscripts.

To manufacture and supply to this vast army the materials of war, let alone its food, was a triumph of logistics. It was reckoned that one Turkish battery

fired, in a ten-day period, nineteen tons of stone cannon balls, and that the Turkish artillery as a whole used 1,000lb of gunpowder a day throughout the 55-day siege. Arrows were fired in great numbers: one eyewitness recorded that after the fall of the city 100 camel loads of arrows were collected from the area round the walls. A camel could easily carry 2,000 arrows, so at least 200,000 arrows would have been collected. Equipment was also needed: tools for digging mines under the walls, and scaling ladders, of which 2,000 were used in the final assault. The Sultan also had a fleet of some 250 ships, some built specifically for the attack on Constantinople, which at the beginning of the siege were assembled at an anchorage called The Columns, about two miles north of Constantinople on the European side of the Bosphorus. In short, the Turkish military organisation was highly efficient on an enormous scale, as Leonard of Chíos conceded: ‘A Scipio, a Hannibal, or any of our modern generals would have been amazed at the discipline which they showed in arranging their weapons, and the promptness and evidence of forward planning which their manoeuvres showed.’⁸

The defenders of Constantinople were at a disadvantage in almost every way. Their fighting force was made up of about 6,000 Byzantine Greeks and 3,000 Italians, so 9,000 troops faced at least 60,000 attackers. Those in the city believed they were outnumbered by as much as twenty to one: as one of them said, ‘We are the ant in the mouth of the bear.’⁹ Most of the Greeks were ordinary citizens, given spears, bows, swords and shields to use as best they could. The leading Greek commanders were Loukás Notarás, who was the Emperor’s commander-in-chief, known as the *mégas dhoúkas*, three members of the Kantakuzenos family that had provided the Emperor John VI a century ago, and two of the present ruling Palaiologos family. The most prominent of the Italians was Giovanni Giustiniani, a captain of Genoese soldiers who reached Constantinople in January 1453 with 400 men, entered the service of the Emperor, and was appointed commander of all the land walls. Also in Constantinople at the beginning of the year were five Venetian galleys, whose captains were persuaded, with some difficulty, to stay and help the defence of the city. Other Italian defenders came from Galata, the walled Genoese commercial quarter on the north shore of the Golden Horn, though many Genoese in Galata were thought to favour the Turks as their probable future masters. There were also contingents of Catalans and, surprisingly, of Turks under the exiled Turkish Prince Orhan. These foreign troops, from Italy and elsewhere, were in effect mercenaries and the Emperor now had to pay them – a further drain on his meagre resources.

The defenders were outclassed in weapons as well as in numbers. Their cannon could not be fired often because powder and shot were short. Of the two largest, one burst when it was first fired and the other could not be used because its vibration damaged the walls on which it stood. Another Byzantine weapon was so-called Greek fire, probably a substance like petrol expelled from a siphon and ignited, similar to today’s napalm, but this was too

complicated and risky to be used often or to great effect. Otherwise the defence relied on their guns and the arrows from longbows and crossbows, and there were not enough even of these. In the final assault the besieged could repel the enemy scaling the walls only by rolling heavy stones down on them.

On 7 April Mehmed moved the bulk of his army to within a quarter of a mile of the land walls, spreading his troops along their whole six-mile length. The rest of his army was north of the Golden Horn, and his ships were at The Columns, two miles north of the city. The siege now began in earnest. We are fortunate to have a number of accounts of it by eyewitnesses or by contemporaries. One of the eyewitness accounts is by the Greek Georgios Sphrantzís, the *protovestiários* or grand chamberlain to Constantine, and his personal friend. Other accounts are by Venetian, Genoese or Florentine participants. Each has, of course, his own agenda. Some oppose the union of the Churches, others support it and ascribe Constantinople's troubles to its failure to accept the union genuinely and totally. Venetians and Genoese distrust each other, and the Italians tend to belittle the Greeks. One of the most useful eyewitnesses is Nicolo Barbaro, ship's doctor on one of the Venetian galleys that stayed to help the defence. His account is in the form of a diary with dates, and gives us the exact sequence of events.

With the start of the Turkish bombardment Constantine completed the disposition of the defenders. On the land walls Constantine with the best Greek troops and Giustiniani with his Genoese soldiers defended the vulnerable Gate of St Romanus in the centre, with other Greek contingents at the northern and southern ends of these walls. Constantine's senior commander, Loukás Notarás, was an abrasive character who quarrelled both with his compatriot Sphrantzís and with his Genoese colleague Giustiniani. Notarás was stationed at the western end of the walls along the Golden Horn. The Pope's emissary Cardinal Isidore, the Catalans and the Turks were placed along the Sea of Marmora. Otherwise the defence was in the hands of a dozen Italian commanders, Venetian or Genoese, and their men. The Greeks were full of animosity towards the Latins, according to Leonard of Chíos, because the glory of saving the city had been given to them. Both the Sultan and the Emperor believed that the defence of Constantinople depended on the Latins, not the Greeks.

By the middle of April the Turks had begun bombarding the city's land walls, and continued every day for the next seven weeks. A Hungarian advised them on technique. 'If you really want to knock the walls down easily,' he said, 'aim to hit another part of the wall five or six fathoms [ten or twelve yards] away from your first shot, and then fire at this in the same way. When you have hit the two outer points fair and square, then fire a third shot so that the three points of impact form a triangle, and then you will see a wall like this one come tumbling down.'¹⁰ But, as sections of wall were brought down, the defenders repaired them with earth and brushwood, some loose and

some in barrels. These makeshift repairs in one way strengthened the walls because impact was now absorbed rather than spread. Turkish sorties against damaged parts of the walls were repulsed.

Mehmed now looked for a way to bring his ships into play. The first use of them had been a total failure. On 20 April four Genoese galleys sailed up the Sea of Marmora bringing help to Constantinople, but before they reached the city the wind dropped and they were becalmed. They were then attacked by 145 smaller Turkish ships from The Columns, and as Barbaro recorded, 'the Dardanelles were covered with armed boats, and the water could hardly be seen.'¹¹ At the end of a two- to three-hour battle the Turks had failed to board or sink any of the Genoese galleys, but had lost many of their own ships with 115 men killed. By next morning, 21 April, the Genoese ships were safely inside the Golden Horn.

On the very next day, 22 April, the Sultan struck back. It was characteristic of him to try to expunge the humiliation of a defeat at once. Since the boom and the ships stationed along it prevented his ships from getting into the Golden Horn from the sea, Mehmed brought them in by the fantastic expedient of dragging them overland. The route ran some three miles from their anchorage at The Columns, over a 200-foot ridge, behind the walls of Genoese Galata and into the sea a mile inside the boom. The ships were hauled onto greased rollers, then dragged by teams of men and oxen, with sails unfurled to gain some extra momentum from the prevailing northerly wind. By the end of the day 70 or 80 Turkish ships were afloat on the waters of the Golden Horn. 'A marvellous achievement,' thought Constantine's friend Sphrantzís, 'and a superb stratagem of naval tactics'.¹²

The defending fleet now planned an immediate response of its own, an attack on these Turkish ships on the night of 24 April. But according to Barbaro the Genoese in Galata treacherously persuaded the Venetian captain of the enterprise to wait, offering their help if he would delay, meanwhile sending an emissary to warn the Sultan. When the attack was finally made on 28 April the Turks had positioned cannon beside their fleet, and with their second shot sank the leading Venetian galley. It went down, says Barbaro, in less time than it takes to say ten paternosters, with the loss of the captain, three mates, eleven crossbowmen and all seventy-two oarsmen. The attack was soon abandoned.

Thereafter the Turkish ships stayed in the western part of the Golden Horn while the defenders guarded the boom at the eastern end. The Turkish ships from The Columns made three attempts to break through the boom, all failures. In fact the Turkish ships dragged overland with such effort are barely mentioned again. The exercise of transporting them had been spectacular, but ultimately pointless. It was some years yet before Turkish skill at deploying land forces would be matched by the same skill at sea.

By the beginning of May the defenders of Constantinople had suffered three weeks of constant cannon fire, and were running short of food. Their

only hope was help from abroad. In the autumn of 1452 Constantine had begun his appeals for help, to the Pope, Venice and Genoa, who were the most likely sources of aid, but also to Hungary, Russia and Serbia. The only hopeful response was from Venice but the ships she sent, after months of debate, were too late to save the city. 'The whole of Christendom', said Constantine, 'has been unwilling to help me against this faithless Turk, the enemy of Christendom.'¹³ The failure of Constantine's appeals perhaps reflects the divisions in Christendom caused by the question of the union of the Churches, the Pope for instance being disturbed by Greek opposition to union and the Orthodox Russians angered by its formal acceptance. Perhaps it also reflects the assumption that in the face of these odds Constantinople was already doomed.

Meanwhile, the daily bombardment of Constantinople's land walls continued, and the Turks devised other means of attack. On 19 May they built, in a single night, a huge tower of wooden beams protected by hurdles and camel skins, which overtopped the walls. From the top of it they shot arrows into the city, and under its protection they shovelled earth into the defensive ditch to ease their passage across it. The Turks also dug mines under the north end of the land walls, where these had been extended and were weaker. On 16 May the defenders discovered the first of these mines. They were clearly unprepared for such a threat, as a search had to be made throughout the city for men with experience of mining. This mine was destroyed, as were five more found in the next ten days under the same part of the walls. The Turks had probably prepared this network of mines to be collapsed simultaneously and to bring a whole section of the wall to the ground. But according to one contemporary they were wasting their time. The mines 'proved to be superfluous and involved only useless expense, as cannons decided everything'.¹⁴

Although Constantinople's fall was becoming daily more inevitable, there were two things that might possibly have spared it. One was a peace offer from the Sultan, made some time in May. It was on generous terms: the Emperor and his ministers could leave the city with their property, and the citizens staying behind would not be harmed. But Constantine refused the offer, saying, 'The city is not mine to give you.'¹⁵ Some thought the offer by the Sultan was a trick: under Islamic law a war was just only if a peace offer had been made and rejected, and Mehmed knew that Constantine would refuse it. And perhaps Constantine had to. Whatever the terms, it was inconceivable that a Byzantine Emperor should peacefully surrender the queen of Christian cities to the infidel.

The other possibility of salvation was that the Turkish army would withdraw anyway. It is reported that in the last week of the siege Mehmed held a four-day conference, where the Sultan's grand vizier Halil argued for raising the siege. But Halil's arguments were dismissed by the Sultan's second vizier, Zagan, the commander of the Turkish forces north of the

Golden Horn: much of the city's walls was already destroyed, he said, the rest would soon follow, and there was no possibility of aid to the city from Italy. The Sultan accepted Zagan's view. It is far from certain that withdrawal was seriously considered; Mehmed could no more retreat than Constantine could surrender. It seems likely that the main topic of this meeting was to draw up in detail the plans for the final assault, which quickly followed.

There were three days of preparation, 26 to 28 May, in the Turkish camp. Previous efforts had been against specific areas, but this culminating assault was to be against the whole perimeter of the city. Troops were deployed along the total length of the land walls, and the artillery – including the monster cannon – was concentrated at the St Romanus gate. A wide bridge of barrels covered with planks had been constructed earlier, and was now stretched across the west end of the Golden Horn, so that the troops north of Galata could easily be brought across. The Turkish ships in the Golden Horn were at last given a role to attack the walls there, and ships from The Columns were to attack along the Sea of Marmora. Every night fires blazed in the Turkish camp and there was a constant din from shouting, singing and playing of castanets: psychological warfare designed to exhaust and dishearten the enemy.

The inhabitants of Constantinople were deeply apprehensive, and turned to God as their only hope of salvation. 'We carried the sacred images in a remorseful procession around the ramparts,'¹⁶ wrote Leonard of Chíos of the final day before the attack. In the evening a last service was held in Ayía Sophía. All nationalities, religions and shades of opinion filled the great building – Greeks, Italians and Catalans, Catholic and Orthodox, pro- and anti-unionists. But the ceremony was 'in reality a liturgy of death'.¹⁷

At about 1.30 a.m. on the night of 28–29 May the attack began. Darkness would last some hours yet, and, while the attackers could easily make out the fortifications they were attacking, the defenders could only dimly discern the enemy. The main assault came on the land walls at the St Romanus gate where the walls had suffered weeks of heavy cannonade. The attack came in three waves. First came the impressed men, many of them Christians, whose task was to bring the scaling ladders up to the walls. When these were driven back, the Turkish regular soldiers followed, and finally the elite janissaries. There were said to be 50,000 men in each group, and even if the number was exaggerated the forces may well have seemed that numerous to the defenders. The Turkish troops soon got inside the outer defensive walls, where fierce hand-to-hand fighting held them, but the inner walls were not yet breached. Meanwhile, an hour before dawn, the Turkish ships at The Columns sailed to attack the sea walls, and those inside the Golden Horn attacked the walls at its western end.

Two chance events finally sealed the city's fate. Giustiniani, the commander of the crucial defences at St Romanus, was wounded and went back inside the city to be treated. His men thought he was giving up the fight and themselves began to retreat. At about the same time a small gate called

the Kerkopoporta at the northern end of the land walls, which had inadvertently been left unbarred, was burst open and the Turks rushed in through it.

The Emperor Constantine fought on among his troops but death soon overtook him. There are many different accounts of how he died: that he asked one of his courtiers to kill him and, on being refused, rushed into the *melée* and disappeared, or that he was crushed to death in the crowd pouring back through a narrow gate into the city, or that he was mortally wounded in the thick of the fighting. The most likely explanation, and certainly the only one acceptable to Greeks of future generations, was that the last Byzantine Emperor died heroically in battle at the head of his troops.

On the principal tower of the city the Turkish flag now replaced those of Byzantium and Venice, and Constantinople was at the mercy of the Turks. Mehmed had promised his troops three days of pillage and the crews of the Turkish ships abandoned their vessels to join the frenzied search for booty. Things worth plundering were now only to be found in the churches. Anything valuable elsewhere had gone, thanks to the depredations of the crusaders in 1204 and the city's increasing impoverishment ever since. Sacred objects were seized and put to vulgar uses. In the Turkish camp afterwards, as one contemporary wrote, 'there might be seen in the midst of the barbarians one with a patriarch's robe, another with some prelate's golden chain around his waist, using it to drag his dogs along, and others again using cloths embroidered in gold with the Lamb of God as saddle blankets. Others were sitting down and making merry, eating from the sacred dishes.'¹⁸

Captives, to be enslaved or ransomed, were the most valuable prizes. The same writer gives a lurid picture of their fate:

One Turk would look for the captive who seemed the wealthiest, a second would prefer a pretty face among the nuns, and then a third, more powerful, would snatch his prize from him and tussle her up. Curling locks, a shoulder or a breast laid bare or an outflung arm, might all serve to attract attention to a captive, who would then be snatched and dragged aside. Then long chains of captives could be seen leaving the church and its shrines, being herded along like cattle or flocks of sheep, weeping and wailing, with no one to show pity for them.¹⁹

Among the captives was Notarás, the leading Greek commander, though most of the other Greek captains had died in the fighting. Notarás was later killed, allegedly on Mehmed's orders because Notarás had refused to surrender his fourteen-year-old son to the Sultan's homosexual demands. Sphrantzís and his family were seized; his two children died in captivity, but Sphrantzís eventually bought freedom for himself and his wife. Also captured but later ransomed were Leonard of Chíos, the Pope's emissary Cardinal Isidore, and 29 Venetians, though the diarist Barbaro escaped.

It seems that Mehmed, despite having promised his troops a free hand for three days, brought the sack to an end on the evening of the first day, and personally stopped his troops from damaging Ayía Sophía, with the words 'Be satisfied with the booty and the captives; the buildings of the city belong to me.'²⁰ Indeed they did. This was the city where for over a thousand years

Greek art had flourished, Greek language had been dominant, Greek religion had had its home and from which Greek influence had radiated. It now became, and would remain, the capital of the Ottoman Empire and the seat of Ottoman power.

Such was the story of the fall of Constantinople in terms of events and human agency, of troop numbers and morale, cannon and fortifications, imperial ambition and mundane chance. But there is another parallel story in quite different terms: of prophecies fulfilled, sinister portents, divine retribution and myth. The mounted statue of Constantine I near Ayía Sophía, his hand pointing east, was believed to prophesy 'From this direction will come the one who will undo me.'²¹ An oracle given to the Emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos nearly two centuries earlier was in the cryptic form AMAIMI, predicting the initials of the Emperors between himself and Constantine XI (Andronikos, Michael, Andronikos and so on); thus Constantine XI was destined to be the last of the line. The most alarming portent for the Byzantines was the eclipse of the moon five days before the final assault. There was also a strange light that appeared over Ayía Sophía, and on a more everyday level oysters were gathered that dripped blood when opened. These portents and prophecies were linked to the idea of God's punishment for sins. 'Our iniquities had separated us from God,' wrote Leonard of Chíos, 'so instead of the kindly God for whom we had hoped, we found an avenger of our sins.'²² As a fervent supporter of the union of the Churches, he saw opposition to the union as the primary sin: 'You Greeks scorned to be united in One Faith; now as a punishment for your sin, you are yourselves scattered.'²³ The fall of Constantinople was also sometimes seen as human retribution; the Greeks were being punished for seizing Troy over two thousand years ago. The Trojans were known as Teucroi, and the name was thought to show that they were the ancestors of the Turks.

In these ways the mythical story sought to explain the past catastrophe, but the most potent elements of the story pointed to hope for the future. A popular tradition maintained that when the Turks entered Ayía Sophía, a service was in progress. The priest then miraculously disappeared through the wall, which closed behind him, and when Constantinople again belongs to Christians he will reappear and complete the last liturgy of Ayía Sophía. Another tradition holds that the Emperor Constantine is not dead but sleeping. An angel had rescued him at the last moment and turned him into a marble statue, which would one day be reanimated so that he could lead his people again. In the centuries that followed, these myths of perennial hope were a powerful support to the Greeks as they looked towards an eventual regeneration.

Sultans and Patriarchs

To many Greeks the fall of Constantinople seemed an unmitigated catastrophe. As one contemporary versifier wrote:

On Tuesday twenty-ninth of May, the God of War was master,
When armies marched in from the east and took the imperial city,
Those infidels, those Turkish dogs. O terrible disaster,
That blackest day of burning fire and all-consuming lightning.¹

There were good reasons for apprehension. Constantinople had resisted a prolonged Turkish siege, refusing offers of peace terms, and the Turks had expended huge amounts of war matériel and blood before they prevailed. What form would Turkish retribution take? In particular, what would be the fate of the Greek Orthodox Christians now that infidel Muslims had seized the city that had long been the Orthodox spiritual home?

As it turned out, Mehmed the Conqueror's treatment of his Christian subjects was not governed by desire for revenge, but by quite different considerations: primarily the dictates of the Muslim faith, the traditions of Muslim treatment of conquered Christians, and the practicalities of government. He also had a personal regard for the Greeks and an interest in their religion.

The Muslim attitude to other religions is based on the Koran: 'Those who are Jews or Christians, whosoever believe in God and the last day and act aright, they have their reward at their Lord's hand, and they shall not fear nor shall they grieve.'² According to Muslims, God has revealed himself through a number of prophets. The first was Adam, followed by others, including Jesus Christ, and finally Muhammad. Each revelation was an improvement on its predecessors, and the revelation was complete through Muhammad, the last of the prophets. So Islam was not incompatible with Christianity, but was simply a further advance from it.

Muslim law naturally had to be elaborated beyond the fundamental statements of the Koran, in two directions. One led to holy law, sharia, based on the Koran but extended by the sayings of Muhammad and his immediate successors and by rulings from the learned. The other led to secular law, the kanuns, based on the customs of the country and decrees issued by the Sultan. But in both types of law the tolerant spirit of the Koran prevailed.

Christians and Jews were so-called people of the book, that is they had received a revelation, albeit incomplete, which was recorded in a text. The people of the book were classified as zimmi, protected persons. There were three categories of such people under Muslim rule: Orthodox Christians, Jews and Armenian Christians, the last being known as Gregorians after their third-century founder Gregory the Illuminator. Each formed a partly self-governing community, a millet. Each had a spiritual head who was also to some extent the political leader: for the Jews it was the chief rabbi, for the Armenians the Gregorian patriarch, and for the Orthodox the Orthodox patriarch.

This tolerant treatment by Muslims of Christians and others was not something newly introduced by Sultan Mehmed, but had a long history. According to tradition, as early as ad 638 Caliph Omar, about to take possession of Jerusalem, promised not to interfere with the Christians' religious practices or their management of their own affairs. More recently in 1430 Sinan Pasha, the conqueror of Iánnina, had promised the Orthodox Christians: 'Have no fear, there will be no captivity, no abduction of children, no destruction of churches; we shall not change them into mosques, but your church bells will ring as is your custom. The metropolitan bishop will have charge of justice over the Greeks and all the ecclesiastical rights. The lords who have feudal estates will continue to hold them.'³ Clearly the traditional view of permanent and irreconcilable conflict between Muslim and Christian is something of a fiction. It was given currency by the early chroniclers on both sides, keen to invoke militant piety to justify, as crusade or as jihad, struggles to win territory, wealth and power. 'Modern historians', writes one of their number severely, 'have too often been willing accomplices in accepting the chroniclers' version.'⁴

Apart from considerations of the Muslim faith and the tradition of tolerance, there were practical reasons for Mehmed's policy. He had by now many more non-Muslim subjects than Muslim. There was no point in taking over the administration of what the subjects could perfectly well manage for themselves, or in antagonising them unnecessarily, provoking rebellion that it would be troublesome to quell. Their service to the Ottoman state would be their productivity, their payment of taxes and their contribution of skills – as Greek sailors and traders, for example, or Jewish financiers – which the state lacked. Also, if Constantinople was to recover from devastation and become a worthy capital of Ottoman rule, it would have to be repopulated. Many of the new arrivals would inevitably be Christians, who would need to be treated tolerantly.

Finally, there were Mehmed's personal inclinations. He could be ruthless in war and vicious in revenge, but he also had a respect for Byzantine achievements and a regard for Christians. His beloved stepmother, Mara, his father's widow, was the daughter of the Christian ruler of Serbia and his Christian Greek wife. And Mehmed was, it seems, genuinely interested in the doctrines of Christianity, an interest shown in his relationship with the first

post-Byzantine Orthodox patriarch Georgios Scholários Yennádhios.

Yennádhios was born Georgios Kourtésis in Constantinople around 1405, and received a good education in philosophy and theology. Among his teachers was Márkos Evyenikós, bishop of Ephesus, a strong opponent of the union of the Catholic and Orthodox churches. Yennádhios, however, initially supported the union, and accompanied the pro-union Emperor John VIII Palaiologos to the council on union held at Ferrara and then Florence in 1438–9. Yennádhios was the Emperor's private secretary, a post from which he acquired the name Scholários. When union was finally accepted by the Greek delegation the anti-union bishop Márkos Evyenikós, who was also a member of it, refused to sign the agreement. Yennádhios gave his written consent to it, though he had returned home before the formal signing.

Yennádhios' final conversion to the anti-union cause came four years later in a dramatic scene at the deathbed of his old tutor Márkos Evyenikós. 'No one knows better than you', said Yennádhios to the dying Evyenikós, 'that formerly I did not join openly in the struggles which Your Holiness led, but let them pass in silence. Now, with God's help, I have altogether changed my mind, and stand with you as a complete and avowed fighter for the truth. I will act for you and speak for you, with my life blood and with my life itself.'⁵

In 1450 he became a monk at the monastery of the Pantokrator in Constantinople, taking the monastic name Yennádhios. From there he continued to issue fierce denunciations of the union of the churches up to the time when the city fell. He was then captured and for a few months became the house servant of a wealthy Turk in Edirne. He was released, apparently on the orders of the Sultan, in September 1453 and returned to Constantinople.

At that time there was no patriarch, as the previous incumbent, the pro-union Grigórios III Mámmas, had fled to Italy two years before. Mehmed was surprised that there was no patriarch to greet him as the new ruler. He needed a patriarch, someone to deal with as the political leader of the Orthodox. He also needed an anti-unionist patriarch, as being least likely to invoke a sympathetic crusade from the Catholic west. The Sultan clearly favoured Yennádhios, but left the nomination of patriarch to the traditional synod of the Orthodox clergy, only reserving the final approval for himself.

Yennádhios at first refused the office, but was pressed to accept by both the clergy and the people as a whole. He finally yielded. 'As there was nobody else,' he wrote, 'I took the role of teacher. Though sick myself, in the absence of a doctor I cared for those suffering even worse.'⁶ The Holy Synod promoted him successively from humble monk to deacon, priest, bishop and patriarch, and on 6 January 1454 the Sultan presented him with a new patriarchal cross – the original one having disappeared – with the words: 'Be Patriarch, with good fortune, and be assured of our friendship, keeping all the privileges that the patriarchs before you enjoyed.'⁷ Everything was done according to tradition; the Sultan was not only honouring Yennádhios but was also taking for himself the role of the Byzantine Emperors.

Patriarch and Sultan had great respect for each other. Yennádhios wrote of Mehmed: 'His understanding and benevolence have been a comfort to us; he has supported our Church and also, by the grace of God, has saved many of us from being killed.'⁸ And he told his flock, in a pastoral letter, that they could live aright 'only by obedience and submission to the church and its protector', that is the Sultan.⁹ For his part, Mehmed spent many hours in visits to Yennádhios, who at Mehmed's request wrote for him an extended statement of the Christian faith, a summary of which Mehmed ordered to be translated into Turkish. Interestingly, there is no record of Yennádhios having asked for a reciprocal explanation of Muslim beliefs.

Yennádhios had agreed to become patriarch only reluctantly, and initially said that he would serve for no more than nine months, until October 1454. But he was persuaded to stay on, first for a further three months to January 1455 and then for another year until January 1456, when his patriarchate finally ended. His two years in office had been troubled ones. The clergy resisted any reform, the monks, he said, were 'evil and turbulent' and the people were deserting the Church. But Yennádhios gave, as his main reason for retiring, his poor health, and said that he had often been in danger of falling down in a faint while conducting a service.

He returned to monastic life, first on Mt Athos, where he had long wanted to retire. 'If I do not live out the rest of my days on the Holy Mountain of Athos,' he had written, 'may I not see the face of God.'¹⁰ In fact he soon moved to another monastery near Sérres some 60 miles north of Mt Athos, and died there in 1472. In his last years he twice returned to Constantinople for a few months, some historians claim as an interim patriarch while others believe only as a private visitor. He is still remembered, in the Sunday liturgy of the Orthodox Church, as 'a shining champion, in all his preaching and writing, of the Orthodox faith'.¹¹

Yennádhios was, of course, a much more complex character than this reverential description suggests. He was indeed a champion of the Orthodox faith, but was an outspoken critic of the Orthodox Church. The clergy, he wrote, were corrupted by simony (the buying of church offices), and the people were drifting away through indifference, a drift that Yennádhios tried to stem by threatening to excommunicate anyone who missed three successive Sunday services. He was a man of genuine humility but a ferocious polemicist, attacking Plíthon the neo-Platonist as an enemy of religion, even burning one of Plíthon's books. This profoundly serious man occasionally showed a lighter side: one of his poems is an acrostic in which the first letters of the lines spell out 'Scholários, all his own work.'¹²

But it was on the question of the union of the Orthodox and Catholic churches that Yennádhios' complexities were most apparent. As a young man he was a supporter of the union. He had translated and written commentaries on the works of the Catholic Thomas Aquinas and had studied other Catholic theologians. He found no difficulty with the Catholic belief that the Holy

Spirit proceeds from the Father *and* the Son, the subject of the *filioque* controversy. The Holy Spirit, he argued, was like the fruit of a tree, and can be said to proceed ultimately from the root, the Father, but also, in an intermediate sense, from the branch, the Son. When he became anti-unionist, it was not on theological grounds but for two quite different reasons. One was tradition: 'I have returned to the doctrine of the Church Fathers.'¹³ The other was simply practicality: 'God in his mercy may bring the union to fruition,' he wrote, 'but I believe it is difficult and almost impossible to achieve in human terms.'¹⁴

For much of our information about Yennádhios, and his successors as patriarch over the next century or so, we are indebted to a German professor Martin Kraus, usually Latinised as Crusius. Crusius became professor of Latin and Greek at the university of Tübingen in 1559, holding the post till his death 48 years later, and was fascinated by every aspect of Greece, especially the Greece of his time. 'From my childhood onward,' he wrote, 'I have loved Greece.'¹⁵

Crusius never visited Greece or Constantinople, but Tübingen had links with Constantinople through a proposal that the German Lutheran and the Greek Orthodox churches should come together, both being anti-Catholic. The man charged with exploring this possibility, which ultimately came to nothing, was a friend of Crusius, Stephen Gerlach, who was in Constantinople as chaplain to the Habsburg ambassador throughout most of the 1570s. Gerlach in turn became friendly with two senior Orthodox clerics and with the patriarch Ieremías II himself. Thanks to these contacts, Crusius began a copious correspondence with Gerlach, the Greek clerics and the patriarch, and the letters ranged over a great variety of subjects, such as vignettes of life in Constantinople, details of the circumcision ceremony and the Greek language of the day.

Perhaps most importantly, Gerlach bought and sent to Crusius a copy of a book in Greek by an unknown author giving the history of Constantinople, both political and patriarchal, from 1453 up to 1578. The copyist was Manuel Malaxós, an old teacher who taught in a hut festooned with dried fish, which provided his food. He made copies for a fee, and spent whatever he earned on drink. One can perhaps imagine Gerlach and Malaxós negotiating a price for the document in this malodorous cabin and both departing well pleased, Gerlach with his book to the embassy and Malaxós with his money to the vintner's. Crusius published the book in 1584, with his own parallel translation from Greek to Latin, and included as annotations many extracts from his correspondence. Thus our knowledge of the period is largely thanks to a failed ecclesiastical project, an inquisitive and acquisitive chaplain, a German professor who never saw Greece and an elderly drunken Greek copyist. It is a reminder of how chancy and how fragile are our links with the past.

After Yennádhios seven other men held the office of patriarch in Mehmed's reign, which ended with his death in 1481. Elections were all by a synod, whose membership was steadily widened: initially only senior clerics were members, but by the last election of Mehmed's reign the synod apparently included 'metropolitan bishops, archbishops, subsidiary bishops, deans, other priests, officials, prominent citizens and representatives of the people'.¹⁶ The influence of the common people, known to their detractors as the mob, had long been a feature of Byzantine Constantinople.

Removal of the patriarch, when necessary, was also done by a synod, with one exception in this period. Ioásaph, patriarch in the 1460s, refused to sanction the remarriage of a leading Greek of Trebizond who was already married with children. The Greek was cousin of a powerful pasha, who induced Mehmed to remove the patriarch, the Sultan using the power exercised by Byzantine Emperors before him.

These early patriarchs also suffered attacks from their own people. Ioásaph, before his removal by the Sultan, was so fiercely slandered by his own clerics that he tried unsuccessfully to drown himself in a well. Opponents of his successor, Márkos II Xilokarávis, stoned him in the streets. A later patriarch, Dhionísios I, under whom the Church generally enjoyed tranquillity, was falsely accused of being circumcised, and refuted the charge quite simply by raising his lower garments in a public meeting. One patriarch in particular deserved censure. If Crusius' book is to be believed, Raphaʿl I, a Serbian abbot who spoke no Greek, was always drunk, never attended the daily services, and at the service on Good Friday was so incapable that he dropped the holy sceptre, fell over and had to be removed. But most of the patriarchs under Mehmed were much better men than Raphaʿl: for example, the principled Ioásaph; his predecessor Isídhoros, described as holy, virtuous and blameless; and Máximos, patriarch at the end of Mehmed's reign, a learned and effective preacher under whom church affairs proceeded peacefully and without scandal. Nevertheless, for much of this period the Church was far from being a serene and united body of the pious. It was more like a feuding political party, racked by accusations both true and false, and consumed by internal strife.

Money played an important part in this strife, in two ways. One was the payment made by each patriarch on his accession, the *peskésion*, nominally a gift from patriarchate funds to the state treasury. The other was the annual tribute, the *harátzi*, which fell due on St George's day in April.

The first five patriarchs paid no gift on accession. In fact the reverse had been the case in Byzantine times, the Emperor making a payment to the patriarch. The new practice was introduced in about 1466 by the sixth patriarch, Simeón I, in his machinations to get the incumbent patriarch Márkos II deposed. Simeón promised the state treasury a gift of 1,000 ducats if elected, as he duly was. Note, though, that it was and remained the synod who elected the patriarch, who was therefore not technically buying his office

and so was not guilty of simony.

Conflict between Simeón and his predecessor Márkos continued, and was resolved by the Sultan's Christian stepmother Mara, patroness of the monastery of St John at Sérres, who took a keen interest in church affairs. She proposed her own candidate, her spiritual adviser who was to become patriarch as Dhionísios I, and sent on his behalf a gift on accession, now doubled to 2,000 ducats, in a silver casket.

The other payment was the annual tribute from the patriarchate, first mentioned when the incompetent Rapha?l was elected in about 1474. Rapha?l offered a reduced gift on accession, back to the original 1,000 ducats, but an annual tribute of 2,000 ducats. When he was unable to pay this tribute he was imprisoned and deposed. Thereafter the relative amounts of the gift on accession and the annual tribute were juggled to produce a package that would satisfy the Turkish officials charged with the negotiations. During Mehmed's reign the gift on accession varied, from a low of 500 ducats to a high of 3,500, but the annual tribute rose steadily and at Mehmed's death was 4,100 ducats, the last 100 being paid personally by the bishop of Ochrid to secure confirmation of his disputed appointment.

It was the Greeks who had unwisely introduced the practice of a gift on accession, and it was their bidding against each other for office that had caused both the gift on accession and the annual tribute to increase, though Turkish officials had not, of course, been slow to exploit the situation. The worst of it was that the costs were passed on down the church hierarchy and ultimately fell on the Greek people. As the traveller George Wheler reported a century later: 'The authority which they (the Greek patriarchs) thus obtain by simony, they maintain by tyranny. For as soon as they are promoted, they send to all their bishops, to contribute to the sum they have disbursed for their preferment, and such as deny, they depose and send others to their charge. Again the bishops send to their inferior clergy; who are forced to do the same to the poor people, or to spare it out of their wives' and children's mouths.'¹⁷ These patriarchal payments continued to be substantial, each fluctuating around 3,000 ducats, the Venetian ducat being the only gold coin used by the Turks since it was the only one not adulterated. The sum of 3,000 ducats was the value of the estate of a wealthy man who died intestate, and whose property was sold. The same sum of 3,000 ducats would pay a troop of 60 janissaries for a year, and in the expensive slave market of Bursa would buy up to 100 slaves.

It is sometimes asserted that there was a 'steady annexation of [the Greeks'] churches and their conversion into mosques'¹⁸ and that the Turks refused to allow new ones to be built. This is only very partially true. In the immediate aftermath of the conquest only Ayía Sophía, the greatest church in Constantinople, was converted to a mosque, but apart from the addition of four minarets the conversion was inevitably superficial rather than structural. To this day Ayía Sophía, now a museum, has the sad air of a building that

does not properly express either of the faiths to which it has been dedicated. A year or two later the second greatest church in the city, *Áyii Apóstoli*, was abandoned, then demolished and a mosque complex built on its site. *Áyii Apóstoli* was Yennádhios' first headquarters as patriarch, but the building was in decay, the area around it was deserted and dangerous, and as a final straw a dead body was found one night outside the church.

With the Sultan's approval the patriarchate was moved to the convent of the Pammakáristos, the resident nuns being transferred to the neighbouring church of *Áyios Iánnis*. The Pammakáristos was a far better location, being in the Phanar district in the north-west of the city, which was, and remained, a predominantly Greek area. The only indignity suffered by the Pammakáristos came 100 years later towards the end of Suleyman's reign (1520–66), when on the orders of an unidentified official the cross surmounting the Pammakáristos was removed. This cross had been visible from afar, and it was not altogether surprising that the Turks, especially the more conservative, did not want to see a Christian symbol dominating a Muslim capital city.

As for the abandoned *Áyii Apóstoli*, Mehmed built on its site a great mosque complex, the Fatih Sultan Mehmed, which stood for three centuries until destroyed by an earthquake in 1766. The complex covered 26 acres, and the dome of the mosque was 85 feet across. The mosque owed much to Byzantine architecture, and those who saw it, including Mehmed himself, compared it to *Ayía Sophía*. The two faiths were here in harmony rather than in opposition.

The greatest threat to the churches of Constantinople came in 1546, in the reign of Suleyman. It is a curious story.¹⁹ The Turkish religious leaders issued a fatwa declaring that, as Constantinople had been taken by force, not by surrender, Muslim law required that all Christian churches should be destroyed. This was to be done without delay, in five days' time. Frantic discussions followed between the patriarch and the grand vizier, who granted the Greeks twenty days to produce witnesses, who must be Turks, to testify that the city had in fact surrendered. Two aged janissaries were found in Edirne and persuaded, on payment of a considerable sum, to come to Constantinople and swear before the grand vizier that they were now 102 years old and at the age of eighteen had been present at the capture of the city. The Emperor Constantine, they testified, had initially rejected peace offers but had finally surrendered. Furthermore, Mehmed had given Constantine a written acceptance, now unfortunately lost, of his surrender. The grand vizier reported this to Suleyman, who immediately overturned the fatwa and ordered that there should be no more harassment of the Greeks over their churches, now or forever. The averted threat had actually left the Greeks in a much stronger position than before.

One strange element of the story is the sudden discovery of the two supposedly centenarian janissaries, whose testimony was accepted though it had to be paid for and was clearly false. The other oddity is that Suleyman and

his officials went along with this charade. The probable truth is that Süleyman had no wish to antagonise the Greeks, but that conservative Turkish clerics – perhaps those who had the cross on the Pammakáristos removed – wanted a harder line. Süleyman could not simply rescind or ignore a fatwa, and needed legal grounds to overturn it. So he and his grand vizier were content to accept the obviously false testimony of the old janissaries, who would hardly have dared to perjure themselves unless the Sultan approved. Thus Süleyman got his justification in law for his moderate policy.

However, some Orthodox churches fell into decay and were abandoned, being put to use as armouries or warehouses. Some were indeed converted to mosques, though recorded instances are few. But Selim I (1512–20) reopened some of the churches that his father Bayezid II had closed, and during his reign the buildings round the patriarchal church of Pammakáristos were repaired and extended, so that it was said to look like a magnificent fortified castle. In the reign of his grandson Selim II (1566–74) the Pammakáristos church itself was splendidly renovated and adorned with gold and silver images and candelabra, so that even at night it was bathed in reflected light. Official permission was needed for building or rebuilding churches, but it seems that this was readily granted provided that the church was in a predominantly Christian area. By 1547 there were 67 churches in Constantinople itself and another ten in Galata.

On the whole therefore the Greeks enjoyed full freedom of worship. Stephen Gerlach wrote that ‘they sing, read and pray, entirely unmolested by the Turks.’²⁰ He also described daily life in the city as peaceful. ‘It is amazing’, he declared, ‘that in such a large city there are no murders and no violence. The Sultan calls it the refuge of the whole world, where all the poor should enjoy safety, and everyone – high or low, Christian or of other faiths – should have justice.’²¹ For the Greeks in Constantinople life was fairly good. But that was not necessarily true for Greeks elsewhere.

The Greek Peasants

The value to the Ottomans of their newly acquired territory in Greece lay predominantly in the land. The producers of this agricultural wealth were the Greek peasants, who made up 90 per cent of the population. The proportion fell only slowly over the centuries, and even in the 1941 census – the last before the upheavals of occupation and civil war, and post-war migration to cities and abroad – over two thirds of Greeks were classified as rural.

Although so much of Greece is mountainous, some parts even in that earlier time were richly productive. North of the Gulf of Corinth the broad plains of Thessaly and Macedonia grew abundant wheat, maize and cotton, and were important suppliers to the capital Constantinople. In the Peloponnese wheat was grown in the west, currants on the coastal plains of the southern shore of the Gulf of Corinth, and in the southwest corner figs, and the olives for which Kalamáta is still famous. These regions had access to the coast and could export some of their produce, including wheat, as the Greek peasants mainly subsisted on the cheaper grains of barley, maize or rye.

Much more typical of Greece is the bleak region of Arcadia (Arkadhía), the central district of the Peloponnese with Tripolis as its main town. Yet Arcadia came to be represented in art and literature as a pastoral paradise. How did this romanticised and distorted picture of Arcadia originate?

The Arcadian myth, established in antiquity, was popularised by the Neapolitan poet Jacopo Sannazaro, whose 1502 romance *Arcadia*, combining prose and verse, brought together the earlier pastoral themes and set them in an imagined place of tranquil and dignified seclusion. The book was enormously popular and went through 60 editions before the end of the century. By the early 1600s travellers were actually going to Arcadia, and wrote of ‘those pleasant Arcadian plains’, of which there were in fact few, and of the region as ‘famous for shepherds’,¹ which would have included goatherds, of whom Pan was the protecting deity. One of the travellers, William Lithgow, experienced the contrast between the ideal and the actual. In Arcadia, he wrote in a flamboyant passage, only just keeping control of his adjectives: ‘Amongst these rocks my belly was pinched, and wearied was my body, with the climbing of fastidious mountains, which bred no small grief to my breast. Yet notwithstanding my distress, the remembrance of these sweet seasoned Songs of Arcadian Shepherds which pregnant Poets have so well

penned, did recreate my fatigated corpse with many sugared suppositions.’²

But Arcadia continued to be romanticised, by painters as well as ‘pregnant Poets’. Guercino in Italy and Poussin in France, among others, included in their landscapes a tombstone with the anonymous and cryptic inscription ‘Et in Arcadia ego’. This was understood as contrasting the deathly chill of the grave with the gloriously happy life of the deceased in Arcadia, and by the middle of the seventeenth century Arcadia had come to stand for an idyllic region of rural felicity.

Arcadia, mostly hidden away in the central Peloponnese, was of course intriguingly remote, as any idealised Shangri-La must be. Also the very barrenness of the region may have contributed to the high-flown image of it. The travellers would have come across shepherds rather than toilers in the fields. Naturally choosing the summer months for their visits, they would have seen the shepherd sitting on a rock dreamily watching his flock or ambling slowly after it, all under a radiant Greek summer sky, and concluded that the life of a shepherd was easy and carefree, at least compared with agricultural labour. The traveller would have given little thought to the shepherd’s lice-infested clothing and meagre diet, with only a wretched tent or hut to sleep in, let alone how different things would be in the harshness of winter.

Later travellers, however, were less starry eyed, and described an inhospitable landscape that can hardly have changed over the centuries. As a visitor in the 1880s wrote:

There is no name in Greece which raises in the mind of the ordinary reader more pleasing and more definite ideas than the name Arcadia. The sound of the shepherd’s pipe and the maiden’s laughter, the rustling of shady trees, the murmuring of gentle fountains, the bleating of lambs and the lowing of oxen – these are the images of peace and plenty which the poets have gathered about that ideal retreat. There are none more historically false, more unfounded in the real nature and aspect of the country. Rugged mountains and gloomy defiles, a harsh and wintry climate, a poor and barren soil, tilled with infinite patience, a climate opposed to intelligence and to culture, a safe retreat of bears and wolves.³

So much for the myth of Arcadia.

The first period of Ottoman rule up to about 1600 has been characterised as a golden age for the Greeks and the other Balkan peoples under their new overlords. The chaos of the last period of rule by Franks or Byzantines was replaced by efficient centralised administration, dues and taxes were broadly speaking no more onerous than before, and the peasant had legal rights instead of being subject to the arbitrary decisions of a landlord.

Nevertheless, peasant life during these years was hard, as it had always been. All agricultural tools were made of wood, including the plough, which was normally a crooked piece of timber, perhaps with an iron-tipped ploughshare. This was no more than a scratch-plough, which broke the soil but did not turn a furrow, so yields were low, and most fields had to be left fallow for two years out of three. There were no pumps, so unless there was a convenient watercourse the fields could be irrigated only by water drawn from

wells and carried in buckets. There were few roads that could take wheeled traffic – some say none at all.⁴ So any produce for sale elsewhere, in other regions or to the coast for export abroad, had to be carried on the backs of pack animals, a laborious and expensive business. This was one of the factors that discouraged inland regions from producing for the market rather than for bare subsistence.

The peasant family was the basic unit of production, working partly on its own land and partly on land belonging to someone else. The family possessed its cottage and cultivated a small surrounding plot of land; typically about 25 yards square, so about the size of a modest suburban garden today. Otherwise the peasant worked on one of the four basic types of land tenure introduced by the Turks but much like those that had gone before.

The four basic types of land holding were: first, the *timar*, land granted to Ottoman cavalymen and often their descendants, in return for which they had to do military service when required; second, land held by a religious or charitable organisation (*vakf*), which might be either Muslim or Christian; third, private property (*mulk*), mainly land granted by the Sultan to individuals or left in the hands of the pre-conquest owners; and finally land held by the state (*miri*).

One should be careful not to speak loosely of these types of land as being ‘owned’ by the various individuals or organisations. Under fundamental Islamic law complete ownership of land could belong only to God, and by extension to the Sultan, who acted as God’s custodian. The Sultan might grant to others tenure of the land, temporarily or indefinitely, or the right to its produce. But these grantees were never owners of the land, merely its tenants.

Where the peasant worked for somebody else rather than on his own small plot, he was typically granted a piece of land that could be ploughed by a pair of oxen in a season, an area varying from ten to twenty-five acres. The grant was by a document that gave the peasant legal rights, in particular that the land passed automatically from father to son, and if there was no son it could be bequeathed to other relatives, even women. If the peasant died indebted, the land could not be seized by his creditors. There were restrictions, too. The peasant tenant could not sell the land, give it away or borrow on it, nor change its use by converting arable land to a vineyard or orchard, or by building on it. Arable land had to be cultivated at least one year in three.

An overriding obligation of the peasant was to share the produce of the land with the primary possessor whether it be *timar*-holder, religious foundation, individual or the state. The contract between peasant and landholder would specify who was to pay the dues on the produce, who was to pay the costs of cultivation – seeds, use of draught animals and so on – and how the yield was to be divided. The formula varied widely, but a typical arrangement for the Peloponnese was the *tritárikon*, under which the superior landholder took three tenths of the yield while the cultivator kept the rest but paid all the costs and dues.

These dues were multifarious. A proportion of what was grown was due to the state or to the landholder. This proportion, often referred to as a tithe, was sometimes a literal one tenth, but often a third and could be as much as half. All produce was included: grain, grapes and other fruit, vegetables, straw, eggs and honey. The peasant had little chance of cheating the main dues, which were on grain. He had to bring his whole crop to the landholder, who would separate the portion to be surrendered; this then had to be taken to the village granary if payment was in kind or to the local market if payment was in cash.

Where proportional surrender was impossible, there were fixed annual dues: on the land itself as opposed to its produce, on buildings and on mills. Sheep were also brought into the system's net: there was a sheep pen due to be paid when the sheep were penned for breeding, another payment related to the number of lambs born, and yet another for the use of common pastures.

On top of these requirements there was personal taxation to be paid: the poll tax. This was about twice as high for non-Muslims in the conquered territories as for Muslims, on the grounds that non-Muslims did not have to do military service and so should pay for their own protection by higher taxes. The poll tax was paid by all males over the age of twelve. The rates varied according to whether the peasant held land, and if so on the extent and quality of the land, or was landless, as would be the case for sons working on the family holding. By one calculation the average annual rate for all males in this period was about 45 Ottoman piastres per head. This was roughly the price in the Balkans of a hundredweight sack of wool – a significant amount, but not punitive.

The Ottoman system for governing its mainly rural subject people was based on the overriding principle that land was ultimately in the control of the Sultan. Mehmed the Conqueror, for instance, in 1478 reviewed all lands held privately or by foundations and brought many back into state ownership, redistributing them to the military as timars – a reform strongly opposed, and largely reversed by his successor Bayezid II.

In practice, the Ottoman system had a number of objectives that in the early period it largely achieved. It aimed to maximise the revenue to the state without provoking opposition. It was designed to maintain the military, especially the important cavalymen, without paying cash, by granting them timar rights to land and its produce. A subsidiary aim was to tie the military to the land and prevent the emergence of a rootless and threatening soldiery. Furthermore, peasant holdings had to pass entire to the heir so could not be wastefully fragmented. Also they must not be sold, so individuals could not, at this time, gain dangerous power by acquiring large estates – as in later centuries they were able to do. Overall, the aim was to combine exploitation with equilibrium in a system where all served the state in their unalterable stations in life.

For the peasant this stability brought some great advantages. In particular,

his rights were laid down by law, and he was not subject to the caprice of a private landowner as he had been under Frankish rule. This was also in accordance with the Ottoman principle that in the conquered lands no man should be subject to another as all are equally subjects of the Sultan. Despite resemblances between the Ottoman and feudal systems, the peasant was not a serf. He was thus better off than many of his counterparts in the rest of Europe, and no worse off than most.

However, this stability also meant, in effect, stagnation. It was virtually impossible for the peasant to improve his lot. He could not acquire more land than his few allocated acres. The land that he had could not be made more productive since ploughing remained shallow, fields continued to be left fallow for two years out of three and there was no way of increasing yields. Even if a peasant did succeed in making his land more productive by better irrigation or crop rotation, he got little benefit. A proportion of the increase went straight to the superior landholder, taxes had to be paid on it, and to benefit from the rest he would have the expense and labour of getting it to market. As long as his family had enough to live on, the peasant had little incentive to do more.

But there were ways in which the Greek peasant could change his life. One was to move from the plains to the highlands, which make up over two thirds of the terrain of Greece. This might mean only a move to the foothills. Here the sloping ground was harder to cultivate, but had certain advantages: it was further away from the malarial marshes of the plains; mountain streams could be channelled to provide irrigation and the peasant might extend his holding by bringing unused land under cultivation. But often the move was to the high mountains themselves.

Remote as these upper regions were, with a harsh climate and largely rocky and barren, they offered more resources than one might suppose. Though too high for wheat or vines to flourish, hardier grain such as barley, maize or rye could be grown. Chestnuts from which bread could be made supplemented the diet, as did other mountain fruits such as apples, plums and walnuts. There were animals to be caught: hares, roe deer, wild goats and wild boar. The forests provided limitless wood for fuel, or for converting to charcoal, which could be traded. Many of these mountain people became transhumant stock-breeders rather than tillers of the soil, pasturing their flocks of sheep or goats on the high plateaux in the summer and bringing them down to the plains in winter.

Also, of course, the mountain regions were more difficult for Turkish tax collectors and other officials to reach. So the mountain communities were left largely self-governing and paid a collective tribute, as at Áyios Pétros in Arcadia and the villages of Mt Pílion near Vólos. In the Píndos mountains east of Árta the region of Ágrapha, where a village of that name still exists, was so called because it was unwritten in Turkish records, and may have escaped the tax net altogether.

Another way to escape to freedom of a sort was for the peasant to become a brigand, a klepht. The klephts too took to the hills, but whereas peasants who moved to higher ground needed to find land that would at least grow some of life's necessities or provide pasture for sheep or goats, the klephts could live in barren mountains from which they emerged to plunder and then retreated again.

Sometimes the bands of klephts would attack settlements in the plains, either a village or a landholder's estate, and carry away grain and other produce on pack animals, which they also stole. Alternatively they might take captives and demand a ransom. But their favoured targets were travellers, especially merchants on the way to fairs and so laden with goods. The merchants might be robbed or forced to pay for safe passage; the recalcitrant ones would be killed. The best opportunities to ambush them were at the two places the travellers could not avoid and where the road narrowed: bridges over rivers and the passes across mountains.

The earliest Turkish attempts to control the klephts focused on safeguarding these passes. Armatolí, guards of the passes, were appointed, and were naturally enough recruited from the klephts whom they were meant to control: who else had the necessary skills and experience? A folk song celebrated this dual role: 'Sing cuckoo, and sing little nightingale, of Nikolaos Tsouvaras, who was armatolós at Louros and klepht at Karpenísi.'⁵ Armatolí and klephts would sometimes combine in joint raids, as they did in the 1705 incident with which this book opens.

So a delicate balance was struck. The Turkish authorities spent just enough on hiring armatolí to maintain some degree of public order. The armatolí did just enough in restraining the klephts to justify their own employment. And the klephts carried out just enough robberies to maintain themselves without provoking a strong reaction. The life of a klepht was hard and rough. His clothes, including the kilt-like *phoustanéla*, were simple, filthy and lice-ridden. He carried a heavy cloak, to protect him from the elements and to sleep in. He fed on coarse bread, made from flour and salt that he carried with him, and cheese, with an occasional feast of roast sheep or goat. Drink was spring water, unless a local monastery provided some wine or raki, but alcohol was frowned on as undermining security. His weapons were his pistols, perhaps a long musket, and daggers, primarily to intimidate victims.

The klephts, though living on the margins of society, came to be seen as heroes. They were regarded as symbols of resistance to authority, and their exploits were praised and their deaths mourned in a host of klephtic ballads. One can distinguish three different types of brigand. First, the common criminal. Second, the fighter against oppression, respected by his social group whatever his motives and methods. And third, the noble robber, the Robin Hood, who always fights honourably to right wrongs of any sort. Over time the perception of the klephts moved from the first category through the second to the third. The romantic philhellenes of the nineteenth century credited them

with every virtue: as devout, supremely hardy, faithful and affectionate husbands and uniformly temperate in wine – though the last was perhaps true only when they couldn't get any. They were acclaimed by many of their countrymen as national heroes. Not so, thought the nineteenth-century historian George Finlay. 'Amongst the literary Greeks,' he wrote, 'it has been the fashion to talk and write much concerning the patriotic spirit and the extraordinary military exploits of the klephts, as if these robbers had been the champions of Greek liberty. But the truth is, that these men were mere brigands, who have plundered the Greeks more than they were ever plundered by the Turks.'⁶

A final possible way of escape from peasant life was, paradoxically, the reviled removal of young Greeks by the devshirme. For the Turkish rulers the devshirme had two objectives, of which the first was to provide officials at the Sultan's court, even up to the highest rank. A Greek devshirme boy, Ibrahim Pasha, was grand vizier to Suleyman the Magnificent from 1523 to 1536. These outsiders would owe their position, and their continuance in it, solely to the Sultan, and so be more reliably loyal than Turks subject to influence from court factions. It is thought that Mehmed the Conqueror initiated or at least developed the devshirme after increasingly doubting the loyalty of his Turkish grand vizier Halil, doubts that ultimately led to Halil's execution. From then till the end of Suleyman's reign the devshirme regularly provided the grand vizier.

The second object of the devshirme was to provide military recruits for the janissaries. Initially their ranks had been filled by captives taken in the Ottoman wars of expansion, in effect slaves. But as expansion slowed, a new source of manpower was needed. Muslim law forbade taking slaves from those under Turkish rule, and the devshirme, offering prospects of advancement, was held not to be enslavement.

Not all the devshirme boys were brought in under compulsion. Sometimes fathers would volunteer a son for enlistment and sometimes a second son was put forward to join the first, perhaps to provide companionship. Indeed it was common, claims one authority, for parents to contrive the selection of their sons.⁷ According to Martin Crusius, the historian of the patriarchate, many Greeks gave up their children in the hope that, if they were successful, they would be helpful to their original family and community.⁸ The devshirme was at least a way out from the drudgery of work on the land, and at best could be 'the path to glory'.

The first destination of the devshirme boys was Constantinople, where their training began: military if they were destined for the janissaries and otherwise according to their abilities. Those who did not know Turkish – probably the majority – had to learn it, and most converted to Islam though in line with the Muslim tolerance towards Christians they were not forced to do so. The most promising were educated for positions at the Sultan's court, in an intensive course of study that could last up to fourteen years, at special schools in

Constantinople and neighbouring Galata, at Bursa and at Edirne. These were large schools; one account from the early 1500s says that there were 300 or 400 pupils at each of the schools in Galata and Edirne. From these and other figures it is estimated that, in the two centuries after the 1453 fall of Constantinople during which a devshirme was regularly conducted, some 200,000 Christian boys from all the Ottoman Balkans were brought into the net.

After those two centuries the devshirme began to fade out. Murad IV (1623–40) suspended it; it was used only spasmodically after that, and ended, as we have seen, in 1705 or soon after. There were a number of reasons for it to be abandoned. Turks increasingly resented the granting of privileged posts to subject peoples: officials wanted the highest positions for themselves or their faction, while janissaries sought, and secured, automatic admission of their sons to their ranks. Furthermore, the devshirme was meeting resistance, not only from the Sultan's subjects as in the 1705 incident, but also from local Turkish officials and landholders who were unwilling to lose some of their best manpower. The decree of 1666 calling for a devshirme specifically warns that holders of land must 'refrain from hiding the youths serving under them' on pain of dismissal and punishment.⁹

Finally, the devshirme had become expensive, especially if it was resisted. The costs of the 1705 devshirme included expenses of the officials, supplies and rewards for the force of 800 that suppressed the revolt, and the cost of transporting captives, and indeed the severed heads of those executed, to Thessalonika. The total came to 75,000 piastres, which was approximately a year's tax revenue from a community of about 3,000 people. That was the cost just of getting the boys to Thessalonika; they still had to be transported to Constantinople and equipped and trained when they arrived. All that expense for a mere 50 draftees.

While the devshirme became of increasingly doubtful benefit to the Turkish rulers, it was always a big gamble for the Christian subject. He might, as we have seen, reach the very highest ranks at court, or become a provincial governor, or at least secure a position providing considerable honour and wealth. But as Martin Crusius makes clear, such success was far from guaranteed. On finishing their training at the age of 25 or more, the young men might become lowlier palace servants, perhaps cooks or gardeners, or become craftsmen. The least successful, says Crusius, would roam the streets shouting insults at Christians, especially travellers, and sometimes attack them, and not even Turks dared to confront them.¹⁰ Grand vizier or dissolute yob on the streets of Constantinople: the devshirme could lead to either destiny.

The Italians in the Aegean

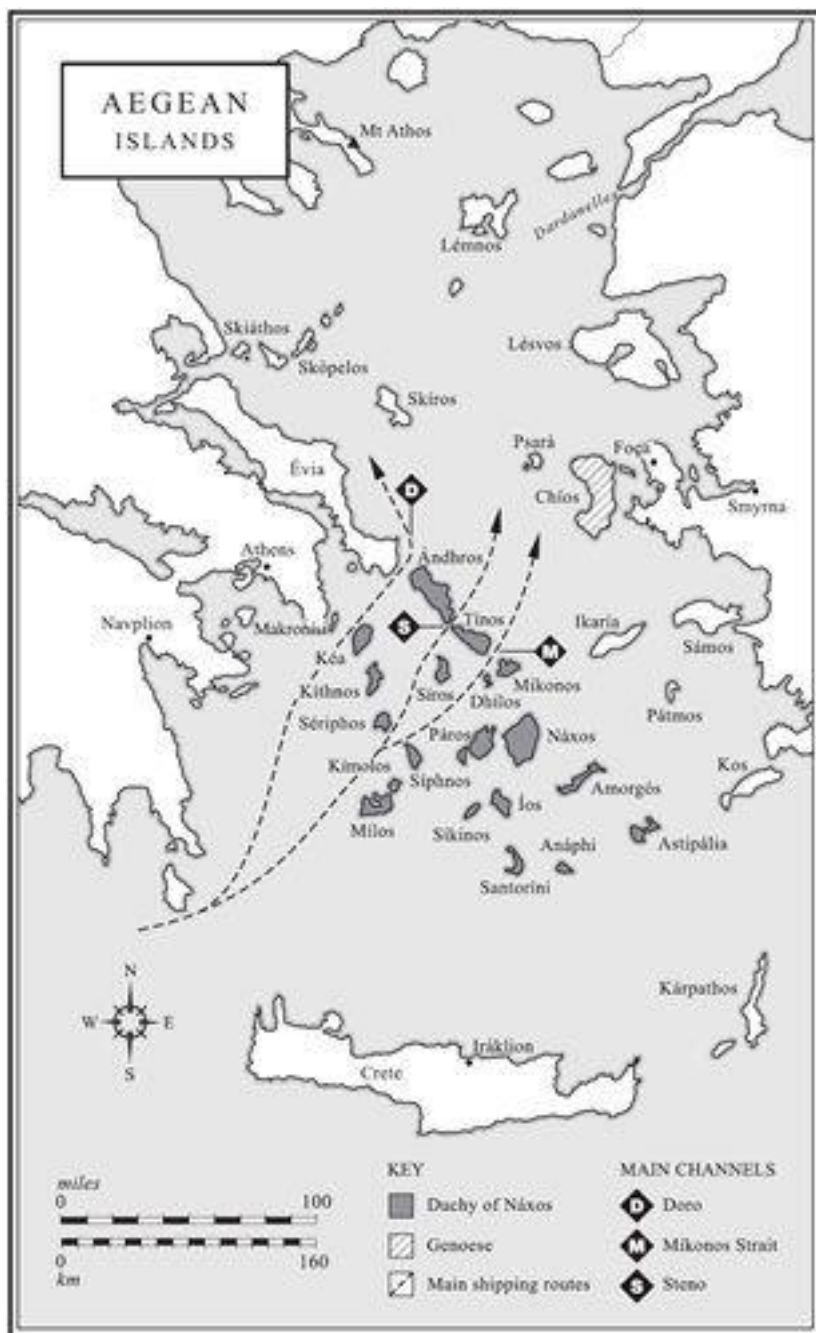
The islands of the Aegean passed by stages from Byzantine to mainly Italian rule, and finally to Turkish rule, over the course of two centuries. Two islands or groups of islands illustrate the Aegean's varied fortunes during this time.

One is Chíos, close to the western coast of Turkey at about its midpoint. Chíos was taken by the Genoese from the Byzantines in 1346, and Genoese rule ended in 1566. The other is Nákos and the so-called Duchy of Nákos, which comprised today's Cyclades in the south-west of the Aegean, plus on its eastern fringe Astipália, which is now part of the Dodecanese. These islands were ruled by Venetians and their successors from 1205, in the aftermath of the Fourth Crusade, until becoming vassals of the Sultan in 1538.

Genoa acquired Chíos almost by accident. In 1346 a Genoese fleet was formed by an association of private shareholders, known as a *Mahona*, to subdue a group of dissident Genoese at Monaco, some 90 miles west of Genoa. This fleet was composed of 29 galleys, and command was given to one of the contributors, Simone Vignoso. His fleet sailed on 24 April 1346, carrying some 6,000 troops.

However, before Vignoso reached Monaco the rebels fled. Rather than disband the fleet the Genoa government sent it on a new mission to the east, officially to protect the Genoese colonies at Phocaea (now Foça) on the Turkish coast, and at Kaffa (now Feodosiya) in the Crimea. Phocaea mined alum, essential for fixing dyes. Kaffa was the marketplace where merchants from north of the Black Sea traded slaves, and was enormously rich. Both Phocaea and Kaffa were well worth protecting. Though protection, not acquisition, was the fleet's declared aim, Chíos quickly became its objective.

Vignoso arrived at the harbour and main town of Chíos on 15 June 1346 and by sunset the next day the town – except for the main fortress the *Kástro* – was taken, after the Greeks had resisted fiercely and 500 Genoese had been killed. Within a week the rest of the island was overrun, and in September the starving garrison of the *Kástro* finally surrendered. The whole island was now in the hands of the Genoese, and governed by Vignoso. In effect, the *Mahona* and those who held shares in it became the leaseholders and governors of the island while Genoa was the freeholder, a situation that continued until Chíos was occupied by the Turks in 1566.



To the Greeks of Chíos what mattered, rather than the nominal ownership of the island, was the agreement made between themselves and Vignoso, their new governor. This agreement was a generous one. The Greeks swore

allegiance to Genoa, and Genoa undertook to defend the island against any aggressor. The Greeks of the town of Chíos retained their property, but if any Genoese wanted to rent or buy a house its value would be determined by two assessors, one Greek and one Genoese. The Greeks also kept any privileges they had held from the Byzantines. These clauses applied only to the Greeks of the main town, and elsewhere the Genoese appropriated productive land and arrogated to themselves monopolies of the island's main products. But the last clause of the agreement seems to have covered all the inhabitants: that the Greeks were to remain 'undisturbed in their customs and in the exercise of their faith'.¹

However, relations between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches were uneasy. At some point in the first two years of Genoese occupation there was a plot to assassinate the members of the Mahona. The conspirators apparently met in a church and a Greek bishop, Makários, was implicated. The plot was betrayed, most of the conspirators were hanged, the Greek bishop was exiled and his bishopric abolished. From then on the head of the Orthodox Church in Chíos was appointed by the Mahona, not by the patriarch of Constantinople. If the plot had succeeded, Makários would have been hailed as the liberator of the Chian Greeks; he is still commemorated annually by a requiem mass in the church where the conspirators met.

The importance of Chíos was twofold, based on its position and its produce. Its position close to the Turkish coast gave it control of the sea route between Alexandria and Constantinople, and for Genoa it provided a base from which to protect its colonies in nearby Phocaea and more distant Kaffa. Most of the island's products were similar to those of other Aegean islands: grain, wine, olive oil, fruit, vegetables and silk. But its most important product was mastic.

Mastic, still cultivated on the island, is a resin that oozes from small cuts in the bark of the *Terebinth lentiscus* bush, which flourishes on Chíos. Mastic was used as a sort of chewing gum by wealthy ladies, who derived 'from that practice as much gratification as their male relations enjoy by inhaling the fumes of tobacco'.² Gentle reader, don't try chewing it expecting the same gratification, but enjoy it as a flavouring for ouzo.

Mastic was one of the monopolies that the Genoese established for themselves, along with alum from nearby Phocaea, pitch (used for caulking ships) and salt. The amount of mastic gathered was strictly limited to keep the price high, but even so twenty tons were produced on average each year. Most of it was exported to parts of the Ottoman Empire, but nearly a quarter went to western Europe. These valuable cargoes were targets for pirates, and some sellers of mastic had to guarantee the buyer against loss in transit from whatever cause. The tariff of penalties for stealing mastic on Chíos was severe and increased with the quantity stolen. For theft of one to ten pounds the punishment was the loss of an ear, and it rose, with the addition of branding and the loss of other organs, to hanging for theft of over 200 pounds.

The terms of the initial agreement between Genoa and the Greeks of Chíos

had been benign, and Simone Vignoso, first governor of Chíos, had ruled justly. But after his time the situation deteriorated. In 1396 Genoa accepted as its overlord the King of France, hoping to secure a powerful ally against attacks on itself or its overseas possessions. The new French governor of Genoa was the energetic Marshal Boucicaut, who quickly turned his attention to Chíos. From reports of commissioners sent to the island he learned that corruption was rife. Offices were sold by auction, illegal taxes were levied, the Greeks were ill-treated by Genoese sailors and their privileges were not respected, the main fortress was not properly garrisoned and its moat was a rubbish dump. Boucicaut sent firm instructions to the Mahona-appointed governor of Chíos to reform these abuses and to penalise heavily any who failed to comply.

The representatives of the Mahona, who had hitherto had little supervision from distant Genoa, reacted high-handedly. They declared that the present French government of Genoa was a different body from the one with which they had made the original agreement over Chíos. Therefore, whatever in that agreement benefited Genoa was null and void, but anything that favoured the Mahona remained in force. Just before Christmas in 1408 they rose in revolt and seized the fortress. Boucicaut sent against the rebels a fleet from Genoa, which in the following summer of 1409, after meeting fierce resistance, took over the island in the name of Genoa, and many of the prominent Greeks who had supported the Mahona were sent into exile. But this success was short lived. Only two months later Genoa rejected French overlordship, Boucicaut lost his office, and the Mahona once again ruled Chíos. But abuses had been recognised and largely curbed, and Greek privileges granted in the original agreement were respected throughout the rest of the Genoese occupation.

In the social hierarchy of the Greeks of Chíos the lowest grade and the most numerous was of those who worked on the land. They had many obligations to provide labour and pay taxes, but few rights except the overall protection of Genoese law. Next above them in the social scale were the small traders and shopkeepers. Though most of these were Genoese immigrants some were Greeks, working as blacksmiths, spice merchants, druggists, bakers, butchers, caulkers, masons or shipwrights.

The Greeks of the highest status belonged to two groups: the Greek nobility, who under the original 1346 agreement with the Genoese kept the privileges they had enjoyed under Byzantium, and the property owners of Chíos town, called burgenses or burghers, which included those who ran the island's import and export trade. These burghers, who included Genoese as well as Greeks, had collective rather than individual rights: to be consulted by the governor on changes in the law or in taxation, and to appoint members of the tribunal that heard complaints against the governor. The nobility and the burghers overlapped: some Greek burghers were of the nobility, and some of the nobility owned property in Chíos town. At the top of the social hierarchy were the Genoese members of the Mahona that ruled the island. The number

of shareholders in the Mahona grew, by successive subdivisions of the shares, from the original dozen to over 900, and their blood relations and relations by marriage enjoyed the same privileges. Not all Mahona members lived on Chíos, but enough did so to form the dominant social group.

In the course of the fifteenth century the position of Chíos as a Genoese outpost became increasingly precarious. In November 1431 the Venetians tried to seize the island, sending a fleet of 29 ships carrying 1,400 troops. The defenders, 700 Genoese and 300 Greeks, resisted fiercely, and managed to hold the fortress in Chíos town. The Venetians were able only to devastate the mastic plantations and the orange groves, and in the following January – only ten weeks after arriving – the Venetians left.

But the main threat to Chíos came from the Turks. In the hope of averting it Chíos agreed sometime around the year 1415 to pay tribute to them, in return for which the Sultan would ‘defend them from their enemies and provide them with grain and food supplies if they should need them’.³ The tribute, initially under 6,000 ducats, was progressively raised until 40 years later it was settled at 10,000 ducats – still a small price to pay for protection. When Constantinople fell to the Turks in 1453 the Genoese colony of Galata north of the Golden Horn also came under Turkish rule. The two other Genoese colonies fell to the Turks soon afterwards: Phocaea with its alum mines in 1456 and Kaffa in the Crimea in 1475. Chíos was now an isolated Genoese outpost.

In the following years Chíos was regularly late in paying the tribute to the Turks, probably because, due to maladministration, tax revenues were not reaching the treasury. The tribute of 10,000 ducats was not excessive – less than the value of a year’s mastic crop when prices were low, and far less when they were high. In 1536 an envoy of the Sultan came to Chíos to demand three years’ arrears of tribute, and by panic measures the money was raised. The final dénouement came 30 years later, at Easter 1566 when the kapitan pasha Piali, the Sultan’s son-in-law, arrived at Chíos with a fleet of some 80 ships carrying 7,000 troops. He had come to demand the tribute, which was again in arrears.

An account of the fall of Chíos to the Turks was written by the son of the last Chíos governor. According to this, Piali was at first polite and genial, saying that he wanted only to visit the famous gardens of Chíos, and would delay landing so as not to disturb the Easter celebrations. But when the Chíos governor and his colleagues met Piali on his flagship the tone abruptly changed. Piali berated them for not paying the tribute, as well as for sheltering slaves escaped from Turkish galleys and for harbouring pirates from Italy, both of which accusations were probably true. He concluded: ‘It is just, therefore, that you should be punished according to your deserts; that is as traitors, rebels and people disobedient to their Sovereign Lord.’⁴ This threat was carried out not by force but by a fairly transparent stratagem. Piali told the Chíos governor that he wanted to buy cloth for uniforms and canvas for

sails, and to do so some 10,000 of his men, both troops and sailors, went ashore – clearly more than were needed for a shopping expedition. At a prearranged signal they occupied the fortress without opposition, and raised the Turkish flag. It had taken Piali only two days to end two centuries of Genoese rule.

The members of the Mahona were ordered to leave for exile in the former Genoese colony of Kaffa, but were allowed to buy freedom to remain for 1,000 ducats. They found the money by selling their property to the Turks at bargain prices. Eighteen young boys were sent to the Sultan's seraglio and, according to one of those accounts which has so inflamed hatred of the Turks, were forcibly circumcised, pressured and tortured to become Muslims, and for the most part died refusing.

By contrast, the Chians secured some remarkable privileges by two missions to the Sultan's court, in 1567 and 1578. The Chians were exempt from forced labour, and there was to be no *devshirme*. Prisoners were to be properly treated. The usual religious freedom was assured, with an explicit ban on forcible conversion. The only personal taxation would be the poll tax, and there were to be no extraordinary taxes. Chíos was to have a permanent representative at the Sultan's court. Perhaps the most valuable privilege was the right to elect their own governors, the *dhimoyérontes*, who collected all taxes, controlled public funds and administered justice. Their continuing powers were summed up by the French vice-consul in the early nineteenth century: 'En un mot, l'opinion des Primats grecs [i.e. the *dhimoyérontes*] réglait en toute chose la volonté des autorités turques.'⁵ This lenient treatment may have been intended to ensure peace and productivity in the valuable mastic villages, which later became the personal property of the Sultan's sister.

An English visitor to Chíos a century after its fall to the Turks wrote that 'the Inhabitants enjoy greater privileges than any Greeks in the Grand Signior's Dominions; and more liberty cannot be in any part than what they enjoy.'⁶ The Chians thus emerged from their turbulent past to enjoy a more favoured position under Turkish rule than any other Aegean island or any other part of Greece.

The fortunes of Náxos and its neighbours were determined by the Fourth Crusade. Those who took part in that crusade had agreed in general terms on how they would divide the territory won from the Byzantine Empire: a quarter to the new Latin Emperor of Byzantium and the remaining three quarters split equally between Venetian and non-Venetian crusaders. The specifics of who got what were supposed to be laid down in the agreement known as the *Partitio Terrarum*, but this document was far from complete and far from being fully observed.

There may have been an understanding that the Cyclades would go to Venice, but only two of its islands were specifically allocated in the *Partitio* –

Ándhros to Venice, Tínos to the Latin Emperor – and the rest, including two of the largest, Náxos and Páros, were effectively available to anyone. In the event Náxos was seized by the Venetian adventurer Marco Sanudo, nephew of the old blind Doge Enrico Dandolo who had led the Venetians in the Fourth Crusade. Sanudo recognised as his overlord not Venice but the Latin Emperor in Constantinople, who awarded him the title of Duke of Náxos, and by 1207 Sanudo had added to his duchy Páros and most of the islands to the south and west of Náxos. Other Cyclades islands were seized by other Venetian crusaders – Ándhros from Venice by Marino Dandolo, Tínos from the Latin Emperor by Andrea Ghisi – and Sanudo claimed to be overlord of these as well. Thus the Duchy of Náxos was established.

Marco Sanudo and his successors as dukes of Náxos did all they could to be independent of Venice, but it was vital for Venice to maintain its influence in the Cyclades, especially against its commercial rival Genoa, with whom it fought four hot wars between the 1250s and the 1380s. If Venice needed the Aegean islands, the islanders too needed Venice, particularly against Turkish attacks in the area, which began with their brutal seizure of Lésvos in 1462. Venice became in effect the protecting power of the region. Rights of succession to island lordships, and disputes over other matters, were settled by the Venetian senate or in the Venetian courts.

The Cyclades were important because of their position across the sea lanes that linked the Mediterranean with the ports of the northern Aegean – on the Greek coast Vólos and Thessalonika, and on the Turkish coast Chíos and Smyrna, and beyond them Constantinople. Any ship's captain sailing from the west and rounding the Peloponnese had a choice of three more or less direct routes to the north (see map), all hazardous because of winds, currents and reefs.

The most direct was the channel between Évia and Ándhros, known as the Doro. Though the channel is wide, about five miles across, the current flows south, and as the channel faces due north it was virtually impossible for a sailing ship to get through if the prevailing north wind was blowing. The next passage to the east, between Ándhros and Tínos, is only some 200 yards across at one point, and so named the Steno ('narrow'). Its advantages are that the current is less strong, and it faces less directly into the north wind. The third channel, the Míkonos strait, between Tínos and Míkonos, was probably the easiest, but for a ship heading for a Greek port it involved the longest detour. To add to the dangers, pirates preyed on these ships, especially when they were forced to wait, sometimes for weeks, for favourable weather for the transit through one of the channels.

The islanders were naturally seafarers, but with no ships of their own took service on foreign vessels. This has led to the enduring belief, for which there is some evidence, that during the long summer months of their menfolk's absence the women of the islands took to prostitution, their clients being passing sailors or pirates. As one traveller delicately put it, the men left their

women 'to their own discretion and the civility of strangers'.⁷ Professional prostitutes were of course common in all ports, but it is suggested that these prostitutes were otherwise virtuous wives. There were several ways in which feelings of shame about the unsavoury aspects of this business could be displaced. Travellers made a joke of it: a visiting Dutch naval officer said that the girls of Kéa must be chaste because they wore 700 ells of cloth as undergarments. Some Greeks claimed that these unhappy women were driven to such straits only by the crushing poverty caused by their colonial oppressors. Or prostitution might even become a source of pride: in the 1960s the islanders of Amorgós would say that their strength and beauty were due to their descent from fearless pirates and comely courtesans.⁸

The main activity of the Cyclades islanders was not at sea but on land as farmers. The system of exploiting the land was similar to that introduced by the crusaders and their successors in mainland Greece, which in turn derived from the Byzantines. The lord owned the estate, and the peasant who worked it paid to the lord dues proportional to the land's produce, keeping the remainder for himself. Nearly all the peasants were free – there is little evidence of serfdom. However, the lord's rule was virtually absolute, and appeal to distant Venice was the only redress against the lord's exploitation, which over time became increasingly frequent.

The farmers on the islands generally produced enough grain to support their small populations – up to about 5,000 inhabitants on the largest islands, a few hundred on the smaller ones. The grain was of the coarser kind, barley or millet. Most islands produced wine, and the vines grown on the fertile volcanic soil of Santoríni produced some of the best, which in time made Santoríni one of the richest islands in the Cyclades. Other products included olives (virtually everywhere), cotton, fruit and vegetables, honey and wax. Livestock was pastured in the hills during summer and on the fields in the plains once the harvest was over.

Some islands specialised in one product, Páros in cotton for example, and Kéa in valonia, the husks of acorns valuable as an essential ingredient in tanning. More widespread was the culture of silk, particularly on Ándhros, Tínos and Kíthnos. On Ándhros silk culture dated back to 1100, the silk of Tínos was considered the best, and for Kíthnos silk became the principal export. When one product became dominant others inevitably declined, and in time the islands that specialised became dependent on imports for essentials, particularly grain. Historians argue about whether such monocultures were a good thing or not. It made basic economic sense to produce what commanded the highest price. Also when the monoculture was silk, production could be in the hands of the peasant, working independently with his family on his own plot rather than on the land of a rich proprietor. On the other hand, apart from the disadvantage of dependence on imports in an uncertain world, the producers were at the mercy of the merchants, who could control both the exports and the imports, and adjust the prices of each to their own profit.

The Italian rulers of the islands were Roman Catholic and their subjects Greek Orthodox. For the Greeks the ultimate authority was the patriarch in Constantinople, who was now subordinate to the Sultan and so, at least in theory, an agent of a power hostile to western Europe. But though some possessions of the Greek Church were taken over by Catholics there was no wholesale imposition of the Catholic system. In practice the Italian rulers would have found such a policy impractical, as there were not nearly enough Catholic clergy available and most of their congregations would have been minute. The policy would also have been impolitic since it would have provoked fierce Greek resistance.

So the two churches developed a form of cohabitation, in which the Catholics gained some powers but the Greeks retained many. When the crusaders first occupied the Cyclades islands after 1204, Catholic bishops were appointed to the seven existing Byzantine bishoprics, replacing Greek bishops. For a time they had the support of a Latin Emperor in Constantinople, but when in 1261 the Byzantine rulers were restored to the capital the influence of the Catholic bishops rapidly declined. Thereafter most of the islands had very few Catholics, commonly about 5 per cent of the population, and only on two did a significant Catholic community develop: on Tinos by the seventeenth century they made up half the population, and on neighbouring Sirois as much as 95 per cent. These two islands lie most directly on the trade routes, and the stronger influence of the west from contact with traders may explain their exceptional adherence to the Catholic Church.

The *modus vivendi* between Catholic and Orthodox quickly developed. On Naxos there was a Greek bishop side by side with a Latin archbishop. But the more usual arrangement was for a Catholic bishop to have under him an Orthodox *protópappas* or head priest. This *protópappas* handled church administration, and though legal matters were in the hands of the Catholic bishop he had to follow Greek law. The *protópappas* also acted as representative of the Greek population. In some churches there was both a Catholic and an Orthodox altar. When Catholic clergy were not available, and sometimes even for preference, the Italians – including the aristocracy – would call on a Greek priest. Religious persecution, which was currently doing so much damage in western Europe, was here wholly absent.

By around 1500 the Greeks of the Cyclades, under the original crusaders and their successors, had enjoyed reasonable stability for three centuries, but now the situation changed. Dynastic disputes arose on Naxos, Páros and Ándhros. As well as internal disruption, external threats were increasing. In the years between 1500 and 1521 the Turkish navy carried out raids on most of the islands in the central and western Cyclades – larger islands such as Naxos and Ándhros, smaller ones such as Mílos and Kéa. Often the islanders resisted fiercely, and the damage done was limited: a fortification destroyed, a few men captured. But after the Turks seized Rhodes from the Knights of St John in 1522, and for the first time had a naval base in the southern Aegean,

the Turkish threat became increasingly clear.

It became a reality with Barbarossa's incursions in 1537 and 1538. Barbarossa, to the Turks Khair-ed-din, was a Turk from the island of Lésvos, born in 1466. As a pirate he established himself on the Barbary coast of north Africa, but entered Turkish service some time before 1520. Algiers was by now annexed to the Ottoman Empire and Barbarossa was appointed its governor, under whom it soon became a thriving city-state. In 1533 Suleyman the Magnificent appointed Barbarossa as kapitan pasha, that is supreme commander of the Turkish navy, with a seat alongside the grand vizier in the imperial council and a residence in the Galata quarter of Constantinople. This was the representative and wielder of Turkish power, with a fearsome reputation in his own right, who now descended on the islands of the Cyclades.

Barbarossa left Constantinople in the summer of 1537 with a fleet of about 100 ships. His first target was Venetian Corfu, but he was repulsed. Sailing back round the Peloponnese he had more success at the island of Éyina (Aegina) near Athens, where reputedly all the male inhabitants were killed, to be replaced by Albanian immigrants; 6,000 women and children were taken away as slaves.

When Barbarossa reached the Aegean his first target was Páros, which surrendered to him after a few days. The island was sacked, some of the inhabitants were killed, and the young girls forced to dance on the beach in 'un ballo alla greca' so that the Turks could make their selection for the Sultan's harem. According to some sources one of these girls was Cecilia Venier, daughter of a previous ruler of Páros, who rose from the harem to become the Sultana Nur Banu, powerful queen-mother and the first to use the title officially. Genealogists note that thus a descendant of the first Duke of Náxos, Marco Sanudo, became one of the most influential figures in the Ottoman Empire.⁹

Barbarossa now moved on to Náxos. Neither he nor the Duke of Náxos Giovanni IV wanted a battle, Barbarossa because it was now late in the campaigning season and the island was well defended, Giovanni IV because he had no strong loyalty to Venice. So the island offered surrender at once, which was accepted on condition that it recognised Ottoman sovereignty and paid an annual tribute. At the end of the year Barbarossa returned in triumph to Constantinople with booty, it was said, of 400,000 ducats, 1,000 boys and 1,500 girls.

At the beginning of 1538 Barbarossa sailed again for the Cyclades, on the way attacking the Sporades islands of Skiáthos, Skópelos and Skíros and bringing them under Turkish rule. Ándhros submitted on the same terms as Náxos had in the previous year. Tínos initially surrendered to him, or possibly only some villages did so. But Tínos quickly repudiated this surrender and successfully resisted Barbarossa's attacks, remaining a Venetian possession. Each year thereafter, on 1 May, a grand procession would make its way to the

Venetian castle on the hilltop ten miles north of the main town, where the air would be rent with gunfire commemorating the island's resistance and with cries of 'Viva San Marco.'¹⁰

By the end of 1538 all the Cyclades islands except Tínos were under some form of Turkish control, six of the smaller islands, including Míkonos, under direct Turkish rule, the rest paying tribute. The terms on which the islands became tribute-paying vassals of the Sultan were not onerous. Possession of the island remained with its ruler, and would pass to his heirs. There would be no *devshirme*. Islanders could trade with the Turks, and if necessary obtain provisions that the bey of neighbouring Évia would be ordered to supply. If an islander was captured by a Turkish ship he would be set free. The only obligations were that any refugee Turk should be handed over, and that the annual tribute should be paid punctually. For both Nákos and Ándhros, the two largest islands, the tribute amount was 6,000 ducats, about the same as for Chíos. The Sultan's firman setting out these terms was benign in tone: 'I wish absolutely that nobody should cause any trouble to the inhabitants of this island, nor take anything from them by force; that none of the islanders should be taken as janissaries; and that no Turk, whoever he is, should dare to offer them the least insult.'¹¹

The status of the main islands as tribute-paying vassals of the Sultan was only temporary, and by 1617 all were under direct Turkish rule with the head of the Turkish navy, the kapitan pasha, as their overlord. The kapitan pasha appointed as governor of the islands a bey, usually absentee, who in turn appointed to act for him a local representative, often Christian rather than Muslim. This direct Turkish rule brought a number of advantages. The islanders were specifically given the right to take complaints to Constantinople, whereas in the past they had to go to Venice, which was three times as distant. Turkish taxation was based on a detailed census rather than on the previous, often arbitrary, basis. The Catholic Church was already in decline on most of the islands, and the last Duke of Nákos, Giovanni IV, complained about the riffraff of mendicant monks and Italian adventurers whom Rome sent out as bishops. The Catholics now declined still further; there were 26 Catholic clergy on Nákos in 1539, but by 1600 only nine. The Greek Orthodox community by contrast became stronger. The Orthodox churches took back their possessions, which had previously been taken by the Catholics. Many Catholics converted to Orthodoxy apparently without religious scruples; perhaps this step was taken because the Turks were less suspicious of those who, as Orthodox, were subject to the Turks' agent the patriarch than of those who, as Catholics, had allegiance to the Turks' enemy the Pope. No mosques were built in the Cyclades. Though the islanders' privileges were not quite as great as those for Chíos, Turkish rule was relatively benign.

With the acquisition of Chíos and the Cyclades the Turkish navy became dominant in the eastern Mediterranean, facing only two threats. One was from

piracy, and the other was from joint action by the fleets of Europe if such a combination could be put together. In 1570 the powers of Europe did agree on joint action, and Turkish naval dominance received a sharp reverse at the battle of Lepanto.

Pirates and Slaves

From the sixteenth century onwards, the crews of any ship attacking another one or raiding a coast were designated as pirates. 'Pirate' was a beguiling term, with its whiff of romance when used by the perpetrators and an even stronger whiff of illegality when used by its victims. But distinctions need to be made between different types of sea raider.

A pirate ship was, strictly speaking, one owned by private persons, usually forming an association, who provided the ship, the finance and the officers, and who after rewarding the crew kept the plunder for themselves. Privateers were different: they were privately owned but carried letters of marque, that is government authority to attack the ships of a named enemy state. Finally, a state's official navy could in time of war legitimately attack any enemy ship.

However, in practice these distinctions were very elastic. The term corsair, though strictly speaking synonymous with privateer, was used indiscriminately for both true pirates and for privateers. Letters of marque to legitimise a privateer could be acquired from two or even three different states. What counted as time of war, justifying state naval action, was also indeterminate, being stretched to cover unofficial hostilities or long-running antagonism, such as that between Spain and the African states bordering the Mediterranean.

The position was further complicated by two other factors. One was the question of cargoes: did licence to attack, say, Turkish shipping also extend to English or French ships carrying Turkish goods or passengers? The other ambiguity was over the issue of English Mediterranean passes, which gave a ship the right of free passage to an Ottoman port and so in theory guaranteed it against attack. Initially these passes were available for a small fee from consuls in Mediterranean ports and easily acquired by foreigners. Samuel Pepys, as Secretary of the Navy in the 1670s, tried to put a stop to this by requiring that passes be issued only by the Admiralty in London or, under strict controls, at foreign ports. But the abuse continued, and passes were valuable enough to be bought and sold. By the time of the Napoleonic wars it was claimed that, of 800 ships carrying English passes, 90 per cent were owned and operated by Genoese, other Italians, Greeks and Albanians.

The most renowned centre of sea raiding in the Mediterranean was the Barbary coast. This stretched from Tripoli in Libya westward as far as Rabat

in Morocco on the Atlantic, a coastline of some 1,400 miles. Its main bases were at Algiers, facing Spain, and Tunis and Tripoli facing Sicily. It was aggressive action by Spain that brought the states of the Barbary coast into prominence.

Spain had completed the expulsion of the Moors from her territory, the Reconquista, with the capture of the city of Granada in 1492 – the same year as Columbus sailed for America. Not content with reconquest, Spain now embarked on conquest of the Moors in north Africa. The campaign was prompted by the archbishop of Toledo, Francesco Jimenez de Cisneros, a bigoted zealot otherwise known as Ximenes, who championed the dying request of Queen Isabella that her husband Ferdinand II should devote himself ‘unremittingly to the conquest of Africa and to the war of the Faith against the Moors’.¹ The enthusiastic slogan of the Spanish soldiers was ‘Africa for King Ferdinand.’²

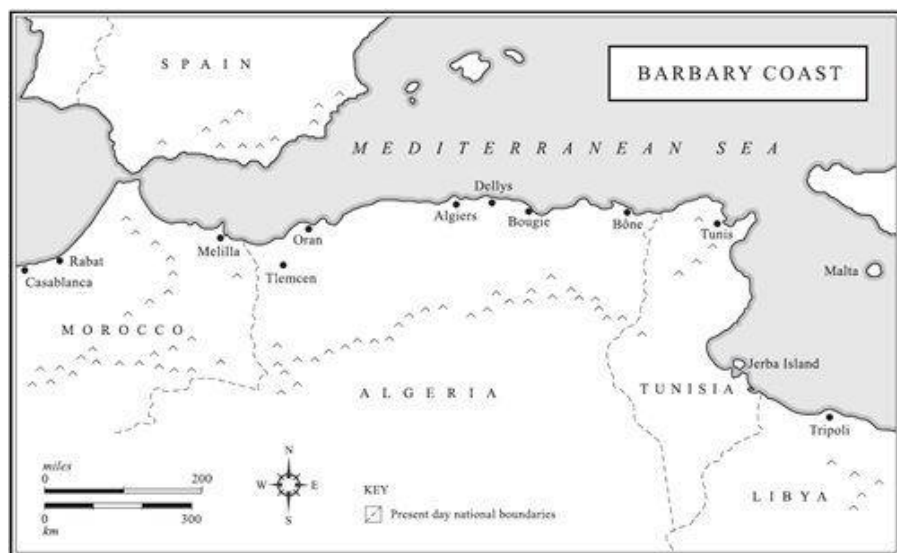
Spain was initially successful. In 1497 Spanish forces took Melilla, west of Oran, and the island of Jerba, south of Tunis, and went on to more important gains, with the bloody seizure of Oran in 1509, and the capture of Bougie and Tripoli in 1510. But by now the local Arab rulers had appealed for help against Spain to the Sultan, who in response sent a small fleet and appointed as bey of Tunis Aruj, the elder of the brothers known as Barbarossa, the name Barbarossa being perhaps a corruption of Baba Aruj. It was the younger brother Khair-ed-din, born in 1466, who became generally known as Barbarossa.

The elder brother Aruj recaptured Jerba in 1510 and in 1516 achieved his greatest triumph, the capture of Algiers, but two years later he was killed in action against the Spanish. He was succeeded by his younger brother Khair-ed-din (henceforth referred to simply as Barbarossa), whom the Sultan recognised as bey of Algiers. Barbarossa had an early stroke of good fortune. In May 1520 the Spanish navy left the Mediterranean for operations against the Netherlands, leaving him as master of 600 miles of the Barbary coast from Tlemcen to Tunis and without a dominant enemy at sea. In 1533 Barbarossa was summoned to Constantinople and appointed kapitan pasha in command of all Turkish naval forces, and, as we have seen, it was he who five years later brought most of the Aegean islands under Turkish rule.

Barbarossa’s appointment is often presented as an astonishing elevation from pirate to Turkish admiral. However as bey of Algiers he commanded a state navy, so was not strictly speaking a pirate at all. Also, although the exploits at sea of his brother Aruj are documented, a modern historian writes that, apart from one doubtful instance, ‘I know of no record of his prowess on the high seas.’³ In Algiers he was primarily a colonial governor, and naval duties were the responsibility of a lieutenant who later became an officer directly responsible to the Sultan. So it is likely that it was Barbarossa’s administrative skills rather than any naval exploits which led the Sultan to appoint him as kapitan pasha.

Barbarossa was vilified in his own day, and for centuries afterwards, as a pirate – the Great Corsair – but the historian Godfrey Fisher, in his book *The Barbary Legend*, sets some facts against the myths. Barbarossa, writes Fisher, was actually ‘in his own age reputed by Christians generally to be a wise statesman, an able administrator, and a great soldier, noted for his orderly and civilized conduct of war and courted in turn or simultaneously by the greatest princes, spiritual and temporal, of the Mediterranean.’⁴

Fisher also demolishes with relish a number of other legends about the Barbary coast. For example the main Barbary ports, especially Algiers, have been represented as brutal and chaotic dens, lairs or nests of pirates – even wasps’, hornets’ or vipers’ nests. Fisher points out that ‘the standard of law and order throughout most of Barbary was reputed to be higher than in Europe.’⁵ In support he cites the evidence of the French official Nicholas de Nicholay, who in 1551 visited Algiers, by then under the rule of Barbarossa’s son and successor Hassan, and other neighbouring towns. Nicholay described Algiers as ‘very merchant-like, inhabited of Turkes, Moores and Jewes in great number which with marveilous gaine exercise the Trade of Merchandise’ and as a populous, bustling, well-ordered city, with ‘very faire houses, a great number of Bathes and Cookes houses, a busy port, with numerous trades, and fertile countryside separated from the city on the west by many faire and pleasant gardens’.⁶ Nicholay was equally complimentary about the Algerian towns of Dellys and Bône. In short, we are invited to see the Barbary coast in a very favourable light.



We should not conclude, even after this demolition of some of the Barbary myths, that its main port at Algiers was a normal and well-ordered city under

an enlightened governor, and whose inhabitants went legally and peacefully about their business. From the 1560s onwards raiders from the Barbary coast were seizing ships and plundering coasts over virtually the whole Mediterranean. Their success was due to two developments. One was the formation of large fleets: eight or nine armed ships, for whom an isolated target vessel was easy prey, and later these fleets might contain as many as 40 ships. The other novelty was the replacement, from about 1580, of oared galleys by light fast sailing ships of the type developed by Christian powers for use in the Atlantic. Between 1613 and 1621 raiders brought back to Algiers nearly 900 captive ships, half of them Dutch and the rest French, Spanish, English or German.

However, a distinction needs to be drawn between Algerian raiders and raiders from other countries who used Algiers as their base because it was a centre for trade in plundered cargoes and captives. This distinction was often ignored by contemporaries, who regarded any ship originating from Algiers as an Algerian pirate. When the distinction was made it often favoured the Algerians: it was the foreigners in Algiers who were described as 'the most cruel villains in Turkie and Barbary', while the Algerians were 'very noble, and of good nature, in comparison to them'.⁷

Virtually all the Christian powers contributed to this international sea raiding in the Mediterranean: Spain, France, Holland and England, (often seen as the most active) as well as the semi-independent bodies of the Knights of St John, based in Rhodes and later Malta, and the Knights of San Stefano based in Livorno. It has been maintained that at the beginning of the seventeenth century piracy of various kinds had virtually brought Mediterranean sea trade to a standstill. Venice in particular suffered. In 1580 Venice lost 25 ships to raiders from Barbary in about a month on the Dalmatian coast alone, and in 1603 raiders from Naples and Sicily cost Venice the loss of an estimated eight million ducats in a year. So marine insurance rates shot up, from about 2 to 40 per cent or even higher, and ships stayed in dock 'in lamentable idleness' because nobody would insure them even at the highest rates. A 1607 letter to the Doge from his brother maintained that 'Trade is suspended, you suffer loss of revenue and duties, shipbuilding ceases, we lose our sailors, and victuals are imported with difficulty. The government is dishonoured, the merchants speak ill of it, some talk of emigrating and everyone is scandalized.'⁸ Venice was probably not typical. Other states took more effective measures to protect their Mediterranean shipping, and in any case trade cannot have ceased altogether or piracy, with no ships to plunder, would have stopped with it. But there is no doubt that for much of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries piracy was a crucial factor over the whole of the Mediterranean.

The Greeks too were drawn into the world of piracy. Greek sailors are often mentioned among the crews of foreign raiding vessels, and they began to practise small-scale piracy themselves. The French naturalist Pierre Belon, visiting the Aegean islands in the 1550s, saw 'three or four men, accustomed

to the sea, boldly pursuing the life of adventure, poor men, with only a small barque or frigate or perhaps some ill-equipped brigantine: but they have their bussolo or mariner's compass to navigate by and also the means to wage war, that is a few small arms for firing at a little distance. Their rations are a sack of flour, some biscuit, a skin of oil, honey, a few bunches of garlic and onions and a little salt and on these they support themselves for a month. Thus armed they set out in search of prey.'⁹

Greek seamen continued to serve on the raiders of other states, and in 1740 the first Greek captain of such a ship is recorded: Panayiótis Christópoulos, from Zákynthos, who commanded first a ship from Malta under the direction of the Knights of St John, and then an English-built ship flying the British flag. Later, in the war of 1789–92 between Turkey and Russia, Lámbros Katsónis from Livadhiá commanded against the Turks a flotilla of eighteen ships, flying the Russian flag but with crews of Greek islanders. After the war ended Katsónis turned pirate, and in the words of the bishop of Skiáthos, 'he began to plunder and lay waste the Turkish islands, extending his pirate activity even to the islands of my humble bishopric of Skiáthos by seizing ships and men whom he kept captive.'¹⁰ Still under Russian colours, he also plundered French and Venetian vessels, though the Russians forced him to return much of his booty. The Turks eventually cornered him at Pórto Káyio, the tiny rock-bound harbour at the southern tip of the Mani. He escaped to the Ionian islands and finally to Russia, bitterly accusing the Russians of failing to support him or to appreciate his contribution to their war.

By the late eighteenth century a new form of Greek piracy had developed. Land-based brigands would seize a ship to attack other ships or plunder the neighbouring coast, and when attacked would flee back to the land. In 1775 a Greek pirate named Karamóschos was raiding the coasts of Kasándhra east of Thessalonika. A Turkish flotilla captured his ships and killed most of the crews, and the few who escaped fled to the mountains of the interior. The pirates were as much a menace to the local Greeks as to the Turks, and the villagers promised in sworn statements to cooperate against the pirates, though under an element of duress: if they failed to do so the village leaders were threatened with heavy fines or death.

Twenty years later Greek pirates were bolder still, seizing all the ships in Vólos harbour and using them for piracy for three years. As before, when attacked by Turkish ships the pirates fled to the land, and the orders from Constantinople stressed that the villagers should not be alienated: 'You are not to harm at all any innocent inhabitants during this campaign.'¹¹ But this form of piracy seems nevertheless to have grown and the Turkish authorities to be more ready to grant amnesty. In 1809 a band of pirates said to number about 600, with 400 dependants, was active near the island of Spétses. When blockaded by Turkish ships the pirates surrendered, were granted pardon and resettled in their own villages. After Greek independence it was the Greek government that had to deal with piracy and both Miaoúlis and Kanáris, naval

heroes of the independence war, were sent to suppress it. The final flourish of Greek piracy was in 1854 in north-east Greece, then still under Turkish rule, in a failed attempt to take advantage of Turkey's difficulties in the Crimean war to achieve immediate independence for the region.

Just as 'pirates' could mean different things in different contexts, so too there was no single category of slaves. The Turkish word 'kul' could mean a literal slave – somebody's property to be bought and sold, and having no rights – or very broadly any tax-paying subject of the Sultan; or very narrowly the Sultan's personal servants, the kapikullari or Slaves of the Porte, from palace gardener up to grand vizier and including the janissary soldiers. Similarly 'kulluk' could mean literal slavery, or simply the obligation to provide labour or to pay certain taxes.

The most privileged of those called slaves were the Slaves of the Porte, with the grand vizier at the apex. A grand vizier of Suleyman the Magnificent described himself as 'the weakest of God's slaves'.¹² These Slaves of the Porte were originally prisoners of war, or had been brought in by the devshirme conscription, or came from the slave markets. But even the grand vizier was a slave in that he was absolutely subject to the Sultan's will, and the seventeenth-century traveller Jean de Thévenot describes how the Sultan disposed of a grand vizier who had lost favour, and how readily the vizier submitted to his fate: 'A messenger arrives and shows him the order he has to bring the man's head; the latter takes this order from the Great Lord, kisses it, places it upon his head as a sign of the respect he bears for the order, makes his ablutions and says his prayers, after which he freely lays down his head.'¹³ It was a not uncommon end, and few grand viziers died in their beds.

At the bottom of the ladder of privilege were galley slaves. They might be captives in war or from coastal raids, or sometimes criminals, who were condemned to the oar in both Muslim and Christian states. These were very unsatisfactory sources of manpower: many had no experience of the sea, and neither category had any loyalty to the ship on which they served. The remedy was twofold: to hire free volunteers as well as those forced into service, and to command by fear.

Many accounts of service in the galleys are indeed fearsome. A war captive, Baron von Mitrovic, was a galley slave on a Turkish ship in the 1590s and later wrote:

The torment of rowing in a galley is unbelievable in extent. No other work on earth is harder because each prisoner has one of his legs fastened to a chain underneath the seat and can move no further than is necessary for him to reach his rowing place on the bench. The heat is so stifling that it is impossible to row other than in the nude or just a pair of flaxen pants. Iron handcuffs are clamped on to the hands of each man so that he is able neither to resist the Turk nor defend himself. His hands and legs thus shackled, the captive can do no more than row day and night, except when the sea is rough, until his skin becomes burned like that of a roasted pig and finally cracks from the heat. Sweat runs into his eyes and saturates his body, causing that peculiar agony of blistered hands. But the ship's speed must not slacken, which is why, whenever the captain notices anyone stopping to draw breath, he lashes out with a slave whip or a rope dripping wet

from seawater until the rower's body is covered in blood. All the food you get is two small pieces of hardtack. Only when we arrived at islands inhabited by Christians could we sometimes ask for, or buy, if we had any money, a little wine and sometimes a little soup. Whenever we rode at anchor for one, two, three, or more days, we knitted cotton gloves and socks and sold them for a little extra food that we cooked on board. Life on board was so utterly dismal and execrable that it was worse than death.¹⁴

There was welcome respite for the galley slaves in winter when the ships were in port, and the oarsmen were put to other work in the dockyards. But in view of the testimony of Mitrovic and many others, it is difficult to accept the statement of a distinguished historian of the period, that 'the black romanticism of rowers chained to the galleys should be ascribed to fiction.'¹⁵ That is true only in so far as the plight of galley slaves has been used in fiction or dramatised history. An impressive example of this was the French film of the 1940s, *Père Vincent*, about the seventeenth-century priest Vincent de Paul, later canonised, who served as almoner-general to the galleys. The film had a contemporary message: the galley slaves represented all the Frenchmen recently deported for forced labour by the occupying Germans.

Between these two extremes of elevation at the Sultan's court and degradation in the galleys, slaves were used in other ways. Male slaves were used for construction work on buildings or roads, or worked on the estates of landowners. There were few if any plantation slaves, as used to harvest sugar in the Caribbean or cotton in the southern United States, since Mediterranean products did not generally need such a labour force. Probably the majority of slaves, both male and female, found themselves in domestic service.

It is impossible to say how far female domestic slaves were sexually exploited. It undoubtedly occurred, but there were limitations: for instance a female slave belonging to a woman could not be touched by her husband. Also there were many instances of female slaves being well treated, if not honoured, in a Turkish household. A freed slave might be married by her former master or benefit from his will, or slaves could even become executors of the will. When considering sexual exploitation we should not be too much influenced by the fact that youth and beauty in a female slave commanded a higher price; a young servant would be a better worker, and a pretty one a more impressive adornment of the household.

For the Turks there were two main sources of slaves: prisoners of war and the Crimean slave trade. The prisoners were taken in the wars between the Ottoman Empire and the non-Muslims on her borders. In the 1550s Ogier de Busbecq, the Habsburg emissary to Constantinople, saw a procession of such captives: 'Just as we were leaving the city, we were met by wagon-loads of boys and girls who were being brought from Hungary to be sold in Constantinople. There is no commoner kind of merchandise than this in Turkey, and from time to time we were met by gangs of wretched Christian slaves of every kind who were being led to horrible servitude. Youths and men of advanced years were driven along in herds or else were tied together with chains, as horses with us are taken to market, and trailed along in a long

line. At the sight I could scarcely restrain my tears in pity for the wretched plight of the Christian population.’¹⁶

In the Crimea, the slave trade was supplied by Tatar raids into Ukrainian, Russian and Polish territory. The main market was the Crimean port of Kaffa, in the hands of the Genoese till 1475 and of the Turks thereafter. It is estimated that between 1500 and 1650 at least 10,000 slaves were brought each year to Kaffa, and taxes on slave sales in the middle of the period raised 100,000 ducats a year, indicating 25,000 sales taxed at 4 ducats each.

Bought slaves might be kept by the original buyer or captured slaves by the captor: Busbecq says that if a Turkish soldier ‘brings back with him from a campaign nothing but one or two slaves he has done well and is amply rewarded for his toil’.¹⁷ But many slaves were brought for resale to the Turkish slave markets, of which Constantinople, Bursa and Antalya were the busiest. Slaves awaiting sale in Constantinople were housed, according to the traveller Evliya Chelebi, in the 300-room Vezir Hani, half a mile to the west of Ayía Sophía. From there they were brought to one of the several slave markets, to undergo a humiliating experience, as described by a visitor in the 1550s: ‘At the break of day the slaves are herded together like sheep or goats and taken to the market. The buyers gather and a price is fixed. If the buyers appear pleased, the slaves are stripped of their clothes and displayed in front of their future masters. Each limb is inspected, poked, and probed for possible defects in the articulation of joints. If the buyer is not satisfied, the slave is returned to the merchant in charge. And this will be repeated as many times as there are potential buyers.’¹⁸

However, not all captives ended up in a slave market. Some prisoners of war taken by the Turks were simply sent home when the war ended. Others were ransomed, and there was a network of brokers, often Italian Jews or Catholic organisations, to handle the negotiations. The ransom money did not necessarily have to be paid before release; a promise to pay on return home could be enough, given some guarantee, and the Habsburg emissary Busbecq stood surety for the ransom payment of one high-ranking Spanish officer. Slaves were often allowed to work on their own account and to make enough money to ransom themselves. Life as a captive while awaiting release could be tolerable, at least in Algiers. The city had two bagnios – state prisons for captives – the larger holding about 2,000. There were no dungeons, but there were taverns for drinking and buying food, for playing cards and gambling, and for exchanging reminiscences.

Ransom was not the only means to escape from servitude. In 1595 a daring Spanish Scarlet Pimpernel made a nighttime raid on the bagnios of Algiers and rescued 32 captives, but such an exploit was rare if not unique. Slaves might simply make a run for it and find refuge where they could. Chíos while under the Genoese harboured many slaves escaping from the Turkish mainland. There was a government department on Chíos, the Ufficio dei Schiavi, to look after them, and the island sometimes welcomed as many as

1,000 slaves in a year. But the Genoese were not so tolerant of their own escaped slaves, and the penalty for harbouring a fugitive slave or removing his irons was death by hanging. Another bolt-hole was in Athens, at the convent of Ayía Philothēī in the north-east of the town, where the nuns sheltered female runaway slaves.

Finally there was manumission, the voluntary freeing of slaves by their owners, an act earning merit in the Muslim world. This indicates a fundamental contradiction: slavery was justified, but at the same time to release someone from it was meritorious. The Genoese were aware of this contradiction, and resolved it by a juridical formula. A typical Genoese deed of manumission would begin: 'Since by nature all men are born free, and slavery has been introduced against the laws of nature by the laws of men, those same laws of men have introduced the benefit of manumission for release from slavery.'¹⁹ It is surprising to find here a view of man's birthright of freedom that one associates more with the Enlightenment than with the sixteenth century.

In this world of Mediterranean slavery, often brutal and always uncertain, how far were the Greeks involved? The short answer is, very little, once Greeks came under Turkish rule, though one might easily think otherwise. Of the time of the Turkish conquest we are told that in 1470 the Greeks of Évia, then under Venice, 'were in great part reduced to slavery'. When Barbarossa attacked Venetian-held Corfu in 1537 he 'carried off many thousands of the inhabitants as slaves'. In the same year he attacked the island of Éyina, also at that time under Venice, and 'about six thousand young women and children were carried off into slavery,' and in the following year during his Aegean campaign he 'carried off thirty thousand Greeks into slavery'.²⁰

All the above quotations are from George Finlay's history of Greece from 1453 to 1821, published in 1877. All the events are from periods when the Greeks concerned were under Venetian or other Italian rule, not Turkish, so were in the Muslim 'Domain of War' and not the 'Domain of Islam'. Several caveats also need mention. The numbers are suspect: Barbarossa is said to have carried off some 40,000 Greek slaves in the two years 1537–8, numbers probably based on the notoriously unreliable oral tradition. One wonders how such numbers could have been accommodated on his ships, and how the slave markets could have dealt with so many. Furthermore Finlay was out to establish his declared thesis that the slave trade was a primary cause of the misery and depopulation of Greece, and his wider sternly moralistic view that the Greeks under foreign rule had become morally degraded, were characterised by apathy and cowardice, and were thus appropriate for enslavement.²¹

Once Turkish rule was established Greeks could not be enslaved by Turks. All inhabitants of the Ottoman Empire were equally subjects of the Sultan, and none of them could own another. The devshirme might be regarded as a form of enslavement, and has been so regarded by Greek historians, but those

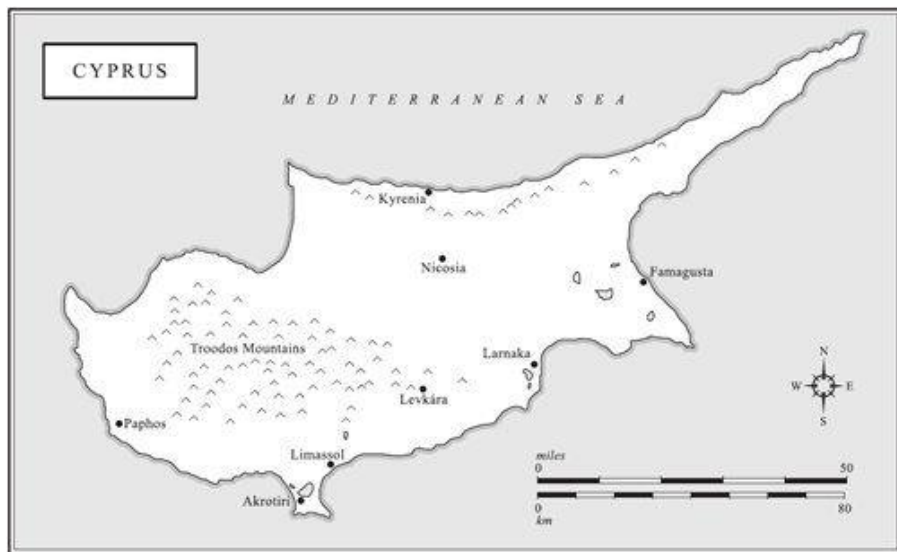
brought in by the devshirme were not literally slaves: they could not be bought and sold. Furthermore, as we have seen, those recruited were sometimes volunteers and in many cases achieved fame and fortune. The paradox is that Turkish rule has been accused of imposing metaphorical Turkish slavery on the Greeks as whole. But it was this same Turkish rule that ensured that individual Greeks did not become literal slaves of the Turks.

The Fall of Cyprus

The chain of events that led to the destruction of the Turkish fleet at Lepanto in 1571 began in Cyprus. The island had been in the possession of outside powers for nearly four centuries. In 1191 it had been seized by Richard I of England on his way to join the Third Crusade, and a year later he ceded it to Guy de Lusignan, former King of Jerusalem. Guy's successors held the island as Kings of Cyprus for nearly 300 years, until in 1489 the Venetian widow of the last Lusignan ruler abdicated in favour of Venice. Cyprus was by then paying tribute to the Sultan of Egypt, an obligation that Venice now assumed. When in 1517 Egypt became part of the Ottoman Empire this tribute became payable by Venice to the Sultan in Constantinople. Thus the shadow of Turkish domination of Cyprus was present from the start of Venetian rule, which lasted only a short time in imperial terms – a mere 82 years.

The head of the Venetian administration in Cyprus was a Venetian noble with the title of lieutenant. He was assisted by two counsellors, the three being known as the rectors, all based at Nicosia. In peacetime military command was exercised by the Captain of Cyprus (often called the Captain of Famagusta), but in war he was subordinate to a provveditor-general sent out from Venice. Justice was the responsibility of the rectors and various subordinate courts. There was a consultative body with few powers, called the Grand Council of Nicosia. This included all Cypriots who had been nobles under the Lusignans but also any Venetian noble, and Venetians of any rank who had lived in Cyprus for five years. As membership of the Grand Council conferred nobility, joining it was a cheap way of becoming ennobled.

The weaknesses of the Venetian administration soon became apparent. Those who held the leading positions were appointed for two years only, so they arrived ignorant and left before they could implement any long-term policy. Appeals against the decisions of the rectors had to be made to Venice and in the first year of Venetian rule Cypriots were already protesting that many appeals to Venice were abandoned because they were so expensive. But the chief weakness was lack of money, and the steps taken to remedy the lack.



Villages, formerly Lusignan and now state property, were sold to private Cypriot citizens in such numbers that there must have been a substantial wealthy class who could afford them. State offices were effectively auctioned, the candidates offering rival so-called loans to the state treasury. The sale of offices in both the Latin and Greek Churches was even more blatant, and continued despite Cypriot appeals to Venice to stop it. At a lower level there were sales of exemption from compulsory state labour, and sales of emancipation to serfs.

In 1562 the Cypriots raised a revolt against Venetian maladministration, led by a man named as James Diassorin, described as ‘a picturesque character of dubious origin’, and according to one report a Greek who promised to support the Greek Church against the Latin.¹ Diassorin aimed to become ruler of Cyprus, and sent an agent to Constantinople to enlist the Sultan’s support. But the agent was betrayed to the Venetians, the plot was revealed, and Diassorin arrested, tried and strangled in Nicosia despite a huge demonstration by the Cypriots in his favour.

In the midst of these abuses and the turmoils they produced, the life of the common people of Cyprus continued on traditional lines, in supplying labour for the huge salt pans outside Larnaka or in agriculture and its associated industries. The island was extremely fertile. Grain was an important product, and the island produced in good years a million or so bushels of wheat and twice that amount of barley. But locusts – still an annual visitation in the late nineteenth century – caused bad years, and when grain was short in other Venetian territories Venice requisitioned it from Cyprus, leading in 1565 to serious grain riots. Other products included sugar, which gradually gave way to cotton, as well as silk, flax, hemp, wax, honey, indigo, oil and saffron. The industries based on these products were mainly in spinning and weaving, and the expensive fabrics camlet and samite were particularly prized. Finally there

was Cypriot wine, said to be favoured by Selim II and a motive for his acquisition of Cyprus. It was so strong that if undiluted it was said to burn up a man's entrails.

Reports of the character and condition of the Cypriots varied even more widely than usual between different reporters. The aristocratic Dominican friar Stephen de Lusignan, probably associating mainly with others of the upper class, was full of praise. The women were virtuous, the men devout, the people generally gentle and friendly, delighting in fencing, games, music and dancing. But a visitor to the island in 1508 painted a different picture of the condition of the people. The Cypriots, he wrote, were slaves to the Venetians, having to pay to the state a third of their produce or income, forced to work for the state on two days a week, and every year having some new tax imposed on them. Another visitor contradicted Lusignan on the Cypriot character, describing Cyprus as 'the island in which French pride, Syrian effeminacy, and Greek flattery and fraud came together'.² As the Turkish threat grew, the question for the Cypriots was whether to support the present Venetians or the prospective Turks as their rulers.

Cyprus was an obvious target for Sultan Selim II, who succeeded his father Suleyman the Magnificent in 1566. Since the Ottoman acquisition of Egypt and Syria in 1517, Cyprus had been a Venetian outpost tucked into a corner of the Ottoman Empire, from which it was separated by only 60 miles of water. It lay across the sea route from Alexandria to Constantinople used by traders and Muslim pilgrims to Mecca, and these were regularly attacked by sea raiders who, the Turks maintained, sheltered in Cyprus harbours. Moreover, Selim was soon free of other wars, as the Turkish conflict with the Habsburgs over Hungary ended temporarily in 1568. On the other hand, Selim on his accession had signed, as was customary, a new peace treaty with Venice, but senior clerics persuaded him that by taking Cyprus he would only be recovering an island once held by Arabs and the Sultans of Egypt, and therefore that the peace treaty did not apply. Finally, there was the tradition that a new Sultan should mark his accession by a conquest: Constantinople had been taken by Mehmed II in 1453, Egypt and Syria by Suleyman's father, Belgrade and Rhodes by Suleyman. Suleyman's son would now take Cyprus.

There was a widespread belief in Constantinople that Venice would not fight to defend Cyprus, and that she would 'tolerate any injury however great rather than go to war again'.³ The war party at the Sultan's court was dominant, and the only proponent of a peaceful solution was the grand vizier Mehmed Sokollu, who by subtle manoeuvres tried to hold back the rush to war. Sokollu, a Bosnian conscripted by the *devshirme*, was grand vizier for 28 years under Suleyman, Selim II and Selim's son Murad III. 'What an apprenticeship in self-control and dissimulation he must have served!' exclaimed Braudel in his history of the period.⁴ Sokollu also tried to persuade the Venetian representative in Constantinople that Venice should not fight to keep Cyprus. 'What do you want', he asked, 'with an island so far off that it is

useless to you and is the cause of such disorders? Leave it to us, who have so many provinces neighbouring it. And in any case the Sultan is determined to have it.’⁵

Sokollu was probably exploring, on the Sultan’s behalf, the possibility of acquiring Cyprus cheaply by diplomacy rather than expensively by war, but his efforts failed. In February 1570 a Turkish envoy, Kubad, left Constantinople for Venice to demand the cession of Cyprus, but it seems that even before his arrival Venice was determined to resist. The demand that Kubad presented to the Venetians was: ‘Selim, Ottoman Sultan, Emperor of the Turks, Lord of Lords [followed by Selim’s other titles], to the Signoria of Venice: We demand of you Cyprus, which you shall give us willingly or perforce, and do not arouse our terrible sword, for we shall wage most cruel war against you everywhere; nor should you trust in your treasure, for we shall cause it suddenly to run away from you like a torrent. Beware of angering us.’⁶ The Signoria drafted defiant answers to both the Sultan and the grand vizier and submitted them to a vote in the Venetian senate. On 25 March 1570 the reply to the Sultan was approved by 199 votes to 5, and that to the grand vizier by 202 votes to 4. These majorities were unprecedented.⁷

Any assumption that Venice would not fight for Cyprus was now overturned. A Venetian fleet was immediately sent to the Venetian province of Crete under Marco Quirini, described as ‘a man trained from his youth in naval skills, energetic and never fatigued.’⁸ Venice also appealed for help to Philip II of Spain and to the Pope, and it was mainly thanks to the Pope’s call for action that a combined fleet was assembled. Pope Pius V, elected in 1566, was a rigorous opponent of the Reformation – he excommunicated Elizabeth I of England – and was a champion of a renewed Christendom against the infidel Turk. Pius V had material as well as religious influence on both Venice and Spain, since an annual grant from ecclesiastical revenues supported the navies of both.

The combined fleet – a league, but not yet the Holy League of the following year – was gradually put together during the spring and early summer of 1570. At the end of March, only two days after Venice rejected the Turkish ultimatum, the 79-year-old Girolamo Zane was appointed captain-general of the Venetian contingent, leaving Quirini’s Venetian fleet, which had been sent to Crete, to operate largely independently. In June the Pope appointed Marcantonio Colonna, a Neapolitan aristocrat, as commander of the papal ships, and commander-in-chief of the combined naval force. Some weeks later Philip II appointed as commander of the Spanish contribution Gianandrea Doria, great-nephew of the renowned Genoese naval commander and statesman Andrea Doria. The combined fleet would consist of 205 ships, of which Venice contributed 144 (nearly three quarters of the total), Spain 49 and the Papal States 12. But it would be many months before the ships of the allies finally came together.

The fleet had a common purpose, to save Cyprus from the Turks, but it was

far from being unified. Philip of Spain was in two minds. On the one hand he was prepared to support the league because he was unwilling to refuse the Pope's call to arms. Also he was keen to check any expansion of the Ottoman influence since Spain was under constant threat from the Sultan's Barbary outposts, and it was always possible that the Moriscos – the Moors remaining in Spain and nominally converted to Christianity – might again rise in revolt as they had in 1568, and be supported by a Turkish fleet. On the other hand, Cyprus was Venice's problem, not his. So while Philip instructed Doria, as commander of the Spanish contingent, to obey the orders of Colonna the commander-in-chief, Doria was told to 'draw the attention of Colonna to what you judge the correct course of action', that is not to accept Colonna's orders without question. Doria was also told to 'look carefully where you put our galleys',⁹ and it may be that Philip secretly instructed Doria to slow the progress of the combined fleet whenever possible in the hope that it would not reach Cyprus until it was too late for action.

Spain's ambivalence was not the only source of friction. The commanders of the different contingents constantly disagreed since, as one historian has put it, 'No one's dignity allowed him to take second place; no one was in a position to claim the first.'¹⁰ Sickness was another problem. The Venetian fleet under Zane went first to Zadar on the Dalmatian coast, where he waited two months for his allies to join him, and during that time a disease, perhaps typhus, broke out among his men. The sick were replaced by Greeks from the Venetian possessions of Corfu, Zákynthos and Kephalonía, some 2,000 in all, but this recruitment simply provided fresh victims of disease.

It was only on 31 August 1570 that the combined fleet of some 200 ships finally assembled at Souída Bay in Crete. Three weeks later the fleet learned that the Cyprus capital Nicosia had fallen, and after some debate it was decided to withdraw and go back to their home bases. Storms battered the returning fleets. The aged Zane, while still on his way home with the Venetian ships, sent to Venice his resignation as their commander. When he reached Venice he was prosecuted as responsible for the expedition's failure but died before he could be tried. Whoever was responsible, the expedition had indeed failed disastrously, which did not bode well for future combined action against the Turks.

The Turkish expedition to capture Cyprus moved much faster than the league fleet moved to defend it. The Turkish fleet was at least as big as the 200-vessel league fleet, and on some estimates twice the size or more. The ships were commanded by Piali, the conqueror of Chíos four years earlier, and the land forces by Lala Mustafa, the fifth vizier. On 1 July 1570 Turkish ships appeared off Paphos in the south-west of Cyprus. Moving along the south coast they attacked Limassol and the neighbouring towns, where they met some resistance, but went on to Larnaka where, to their surprise, they landed unopposed. On 22 July a Turkish force led by Lala Mustafa of 100,000 men – some accounts say even more – set out for the capital Nicosia in the centre of

the island, and three days later the siege began.

The defence of Nicosia was the responsibility of Nicolo Dandolo, the lieutenant or civilian governor of Cyprus. Normally in time of war a provveditor-general sent out from Venice would have been in command, but the incumbent had died the year before and two successive replacements never reached the island, so Dandolo had been given the title of vice-provveditor.

No account has a good word for Dandolo. He was described as poor spirited, stupid and irascible, and said to veer between keenness and slackness with every passing rumour. But he was in a virtually impossible position. He was heavily outnumbered, having some 20,000 fighting men, Italians and Greeks, only about half of whom were trained and not sick, to face 100,000 or more besiegers. Nicosia's defensive walls, in the shape of an eleven-point star, seemed formidable, but had not been properly maintained – for which Dandolo was blamed – and were subject to continuous bombardment. Gunpowder was short. A sortie in force on 15 August failed, in some accounts because of the indiscipline of the Greek troops, and Dandolo forbade any future sorties. This can be regarded as the turning point of the siege: if there were to be no more attacks, it was only a matter of time before weak defences gave way. On 9 September, after a 45-day siege and a final bombardment of the walls, the Turks entered the city and overwhelmed the defenders. The city never formally surrendered, but a drunken Greek pulled down the flag of St Mark and raised the Turkish flag in its place. A three-day sack followed, said to yield more plunder than any city since Constantinople in 1453. Dandolo was captured and beheaded, and his severed head sent as a statement of intent to Famagusta, now the only town on the island still resisting the Turks, and Lala Mustafa's next objective.

The response of the Greeks of Cyprus to the Turkish invasion was far from uniform. Greeks played a part in the defence of Nicosia, and later, with sustained courage, in that of Famagusta. Others, however, may have welcomed the invaders. The Greeks of Lévkara, a village some ten miles inland between Limassol and Larnaka, not only yielded at once to the Turks – they could do little else – but also apparently sent messengers to the nearby villagers encouraging them too to submit. In retribution for this support of the Turkish invader, and as a warning to others, the Venetians killed all the inhabitants of Lévkara who were capable of fighting and destroyed the village. One cannot say whether the villagers of Lévkara genuinely supported the Turks or merely submitted to *force majeure*, but the brutal responses of the Venetians suggest their fears that other Greek Cypriots would favour the Turks.

The siege of Famagusta, the last outpost of resistance to the Turks, began on 16 September 1570. Here the Greeks seem fully to have supported the Venetians, and in accounts of the siege are regularly mentioned as serving the guns, repairing the defences or building new ones. In the final assault they

made a last stand near the Greek cathedral, where two Greek bishops and many Greek priests and monks were killed.

This Greek support may have been because their Venetian commanders at Famagusta were so much better than the incompetent Dandolo at Nicosia. There were two leaders of the defence of Famagusta. One was Astorre Baglione, who had been sent out from Venice in April 1570 as military governor of Cyprus and commander-in-chief of the island's defence. He would have been subordinate to a provveditor-general had there been one, and his authority in relation to the vice-provveditor Dandolo was never clear. The other was Marcantonio Bragadino, the civil governor of Famagusta, nominally subordinate to Baglione though in practice they acted in concert.

Under these two commanders the troops were regularly paid, and fed as well as the rationing of short supplies allowed: 'As long as there was a dram of food, Bragadino distributed it; and when there was none, there still remained his good will.'¹¹ Baglione personally led 26 skirmishes against the Turks, saying 'I, who love my soldiers, go with them.'¹² The only criticism of him was that perhaps he should command more and fight less.

Under Baglione and Bragadino the Famagusta defence held out for almost a year. There was a moment of hope when Marco Quirini, with the Venetian fleet that was operating independently of the ineffective league, arrived at Famagusta from Crete in January 1571. He destroyed three Turkish ships and some Turkish fortifications, and took on board valuables for safe keeping and the children and non-combatants of the town, but after three weeks he left, with promises of future but unspecified help. False hopes that a Christian fleet was about to appear were regularly raised towards the end of the siege – on occasions in May, June and July 1571 – but all were as regularly disappointed.

In June the Turks, after months of bombardment, launched the final phase of the siege, a series of six or seven assaults during the month. The defenders were by now in desperate straits. At the start of the siege there had been 3,000 to 4,000 Italian troops; but by now all but 900 had been killed, and of these survivors some 400 were wounded and the remaining 500 were exhausted. Gunpowder had almost run out. Food supplies were nearly finished, and even all the horses, donkeys and cats had been eaten. But the besieged fought on, and a Turkish despatch to Constantinople acknowledged their heroism, saying that Famagusta was defended not by men but by giants. In the end, though, heroism was not enough. In mid-July the Bishop of Limassol came to Bragadino and Baglione and appealed to them to give up the town for the sake of all the defenders. The commanders delayed a decision for a fortnight but on 1 August 1571 raised on the ramparts the white flag of surrender.

There was no authorised sack of Famagusta as there had been at Nicosia. There was less to plunder at Famagusta, but the main reason for its better treatment seems to have been that Famagusta had formally surrendered whereas Nicosia had not. The terms of surrender too were lenient. Lala

Mustafa agreed to send the commanders and all the garrison safely to Crete, promised the people of Famagusta to intercede with the Sultan for them and praised the gallantry of Bragadino and Baglione.

After a few days these amicable relations were shattered. On the evening of 5 August Bragadino and Baglione with other officers went to Lala Mustafa's camp to discuss the details of the surrender terms. In the course of the discussion Lala Mustafa was said to have flown into a rage and ordered the visitors to be seized. Baglione was executed on the spot, and Lala Mustafa triumphantly raised his severed head. Bragadino had his nose and ears cut off, and twelve days later, seriously ill from his festering wounds, faced his final humiliation. After being forced to carry sacks of earth and stones round the ramparts he had defended, he was tied naked to a column in the main square and flayed alive, that is his skin was carved from his body. After his death the skin was cured and stuffed with straw, dressed in his clothes and paraded round Famagusta on the back of a cow.

It is a horrific story, and though some details may be anti-Turk propaganda the main facts are well documented. The major question is over Lala Mustafa's motives. He may have been infuriated because Muslim hostages in Famagusta had been killed, but he would have known this from the time when the city surrendered if not earlier. A sudden fit of temper is unlikely: anyone who had risen through the Ottoman hierarchy as he had was well used to calculating the effects of his actions. Perhaps Lala Mustafa planned this revenge from the beginning, and his original friendliness was merely a decoy. Whatever his motives, the theatricality of the retribution was clearly designed to send a message: perhaps to the Venetians (that resistance to the Turks had a high price) or to the Cypriots (that he was their master now) or to his own troops (that he had at last triumphed) or maybe to the Sultan (to dramatise his victory). The story was widely circulated at the time and for centuries afterwards,¹³ and the death of Bragadino at the hands of Lala Mustafa was a characteristic element in the image of the Turk as ruthless, sadistic and probably deceitful.

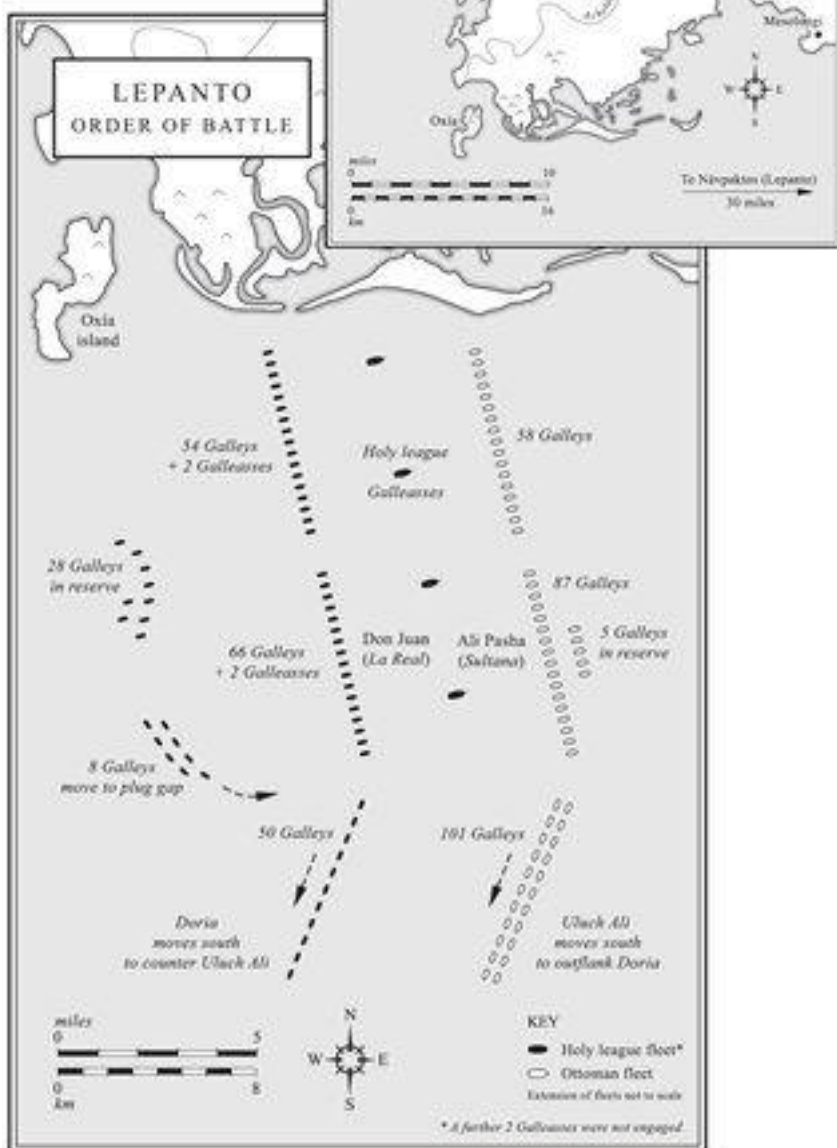
1571 – Lepanto

In 1570 the allied fleets of Venice, Spain and the Papal States had been put together with the object of saving Cyprus from the Turks. This league – with a small ‘1’ – had failed to save Cyprus and had never even confronted the Turkish fleet. But by the beginning of the following year the attitudes of the three allies had hardened.

Spain had become increasingly aware of the Turkish threat from the sea. In 1570 the ruler of Ottoman Algiers had seized Tunis from Spain. Raiders from the nearby Barbary coast were a continuing menace and any renewed Morisco revolt might yet be supported by a Turkish fleet. Venice, by rejecting the Turkish ultimatum over Cyprus, had chosen war rather than diplomacy as the safeguard of her possessions, and for war she needed allies. The determination of Pope Pius V to fight a holy war against the infidel had only been increased by the failures of 1570.

Thus on 25 May 1571 the Pope was able to proclaim a Holy League. Its leading members were to be, as in 1570, Spain, Venice and the Papal States, and now other Italian cities and the Knights of St John of Malta also pledged support. The Holy League was to be perpetual, its forces assembling each spring to campaign against the Turks and, reflecting Spain’s concerns, against the Barbary coast. The League forces were to be 200 galleys plus 100 other warships, 50,000 infantry, and 4,500 cavalry. Costs and plunder were to be divided in the proportions Spain three, Venice two, and the Pope one, though Spain was to keep any conquests in North Africa.

Spain’s increased commitment was reflected in her contribution of ships. In the 1570 fleet of 205 vessels, Spain had provided only a third of the number from Venice: 49 against 144. In the 1571 Holy League total fleet of 316 ships (both fighting and support vessels) Spanish outnumbered Venetian by 164 to 134. But the Venetian fleet included six warships of a type newly developed, the galleasse, not yet tested in battle. Like the galley, the galleasse could be moved by oars or by sail, but the galleasse was much larger: 600 tons against the galley’s 140, longer and wider, so requiring twice as many oarsmen, and with more guns, thirteen against five. The galleasses were to play an important part at Lepanto.



Of the commanders, two remained from the previous year: Colonna as before led the papal contingent, and Doria commanded ten galleys leased by Spain from Genoa. The Venetian fleet command had changed as Zane, the 1570 leader, had resigned in disgrace: the new appointment was the 75-year-old Sebastiano Venier, former Venetian governor of Corfu, elected

provveditor-general of Cyprus though he never reached the island; later in his eighties he briefly became Doge of Venice. Commanding the dominant Spanish contingent, and in overall command of the Holy League fleet, was the man whom Lepanto was to make famous: Don Juan of Austria, anglicised as Don John, illegitimate son of the Habsburg Emperor Charles V (hence ‘of Austria’), half-brother of Philip II of Spain, and hero of the recent suppression of the Morisco revolt.

Don Juan was not to go into battle without the agreement of a council representing the other contingents, but how a battle, once joined, was fought was up to him. It was clear that Don Juan would be far bolder than the cautious Spanish commander Doria had been a year earlier. The Pope’s representative in Madrid, meeting Don Juan before he took up his post, reported that ‘he is a Prince so desirous of glory that if the opportunity arises he will not be restrained by the Council that is to advise him and will not look so much to save galleys as to gather glory and honour.’¹

The Holy League fleet took time to assemble. The same papal representative commented that in Spain ‘the doing of things promptly is not something to be found in this country, better said its normal condition is to do everything late.’² Nevertheless Don Juan sailed from Barcelona on 20 June 1571 with some of his allies, and collected others as he went on to Genoa, La Spezia and Naples. The whole fleet finally assembled in the port of Messina at the north-east tip of Sicily on 23 August, three weeks after the fall of Famagusta.

The Turkish fleet, under Ali Pasha but with Pertev Pasha commanding the land forces, had earlier been stationed on the east coast of Greece at Évia, ready to intercept any attempt by the Holy League to save Cyprus. When no such attempt was made, Ali Pasha sailed round the Peloponnese and into the Adriatic as far north as Venice, raiding Venetian possessions as he went. Ali Pasha then learned that the Holy League fleet was assembled at Messina and, fearing that he might be bottled up in the Adriatic, withdrew to the shelter of the Gulf of Corinth under the fortress at Návpaktos, then known as Lepanto. By 16 September Don Juan had been instructed to seek out the Turkish fleet, and on 29 September he learned where it was – at Lepanto.

Ali Pasha would have done well to stay there. To attack him there the Holy League ships would have had to pass through the narrow entrance to the Gulf of Corinth, only a mile and a half wide, practically in single file, and been easy targets if they had tried it. The campaigning season was almost over, and if the allies had sailed home after a second year of achieving nothing the Holy League might well have unravelled. But Ali Pasha received unequivocal orders from the Sultan ‘to find and immediately attack the infidel fleet’.³

On the morning of Sunday 7 October 1571, the Holy League and Turkish fleets faced each other just west of the mouth of the Gulf of Corinth, in two immense lines stretching some four miles. The Turks faced west, with their backs to the Greek mainland and initially with the wind behind them, while

the Holy League faced east. The number of fighting ships involved – 208 Holy League and 251 Turkish – was the largest that ever took part in a naval battle.

In a novel tactic for naval warfare Don Juan stationed his galleasses singly some three quarters of a mile ahead of his line and about half a mile apart. There were six galleasses in his fleet, and four were stationed to protect his left and centre. The other two were intended to protect his right, but, as we shall see, they in fact took no part in the battle. The galleasses were to be used as floating artillery platforms. Their guns had a greater range than the Turkish, so could bombard them before they could reply, and an attacking fleet passing the galleasses could be raked broadside.

In a second innovation Don Juan had the huge beaks of his galleys removed. These had traditionally been used to ram and impale an enemy ship, but as naval gunnery had developed they had become a hindrance, obstructing the line of sight of the forward gunner and encouraging him to fire high, at the opponent's rigging rather than the hull.

At about half past ten, after morning prayers on both sides, the battle was opened with the usual formal challenge, of a blank charge from Ali Pasha's flagship the *Sultana*, answered by a shot from Don Juan's *La Real*. The fighting developed into three separate actions. On the Holy League left the galleasses did their work of breaking up the Turkish advance and the League ships drove the Turks against the neighbouring shore. The wind had initially been from the east but now swung round to the west in the League's favour, a shift attributed to divine intervention. In this sector the League commander was killed but not a single Turkish ship escaped sinking or capture.

In the centre, where Don Juan and Ali Pasha faced each other, the two forward galleasses were again effective, and then the ships became locked in individual combat. Ali Pasha's *Sultana* rammed Don Juan's *La Real* and hand-to-hand fighting on the decks followed, a land battle fought on water. A contemporary wrote: 'Battle was joined with the greatest vigour and fury, and with noise so great it seemed not only that the galleys must be tearing each other apart, but that the sea itself roared in protest at the appalling clamour, whipping its previously calm surface into foaming waves, and deafened men could no longer hear each other, and the sky vanished from their sight amid the darkening smoke from the flames.'⁴ Don Juan, wielding a double-handed sword, was wounded in the ankle, an injury he claimed not to have noticed, and Ali Pasha was killed. In this sector too the League was victorious.

Things did not at first go so well for the Holy League right, commanded by Doria. He was without his protective galleasses; as the fleet sailed from the north to take up position Doria had the furthest to go, and the slow galleasses would have been an encumbrance. Also he may have foreseen that the Turks would try to outflank him and that ponderous galleasses would be no help in a battle requiring mobility. Furthermore, Doria was heavily outnumbered, with his 50 ships facing over 100. This enabled the Turkish commander Uluch Ali

to spread his fleet southwards to his left and threaten to sail round Doria's right flank, turn, and attack – with a now following wind – from the rear. Doria also moved south to prevent this, but with the result that he left a gap between his wing and the League centre, a gap that Uluch Ali now attacked. Doria has been severely criticised for this decision, but it was surely the correct one. A gap on his left could be plugged by League ships from the centre and the reserves, as in fact it was, whereas an opening on his right meant being outflanked and almost certainly defeated. But by this time it was clear to Uluch Ali that the Turkish centre and right had lost and he abandoned the fight, sailing north to Levkás and on to Préviza. The Holy League victory was complete.

A Spaniard who took part in Lepanto described the resulting carnage:

The greater fury of the battle lasted near to four hours and was so bloody and horrendous that the sea and the fire seemed as one, many Turkish galleys burning down to the water and the surface of the sea, red with blood, was covered with Moorish coats, turbans, quivers, arrows, bows, shields, oars, boxes, cases and other spoils of war, and above all many human bodies, Christian as well as Turkish, some dead, some wounded, some torn apart, and some not yet resigned to their fate struggling on the surface in their death agony, their strength ebbing away with the blood flowing from their wounds in such quantity that the sea was entirely coloured by it, but despite all this misery our men were not moved to pity for the enemy. Although they begged for mercy they received instead arquebus shots and pike thrusts.⁵

Some 200 of the 251 Turkish ships had been destroyed or captured, with the loss of men variously estimated between 20,000 and 30,000. The Holy League losses were much lower: about 50 ships and probably 13,000 killed or mortally wounded.

The two sides had been fairly evenly matched. The Turks had an advantage in the number of fighting ships (251 against 208) and number of soldiers (some 31,000 against 23,000) but the Holy League had more cannon (by one count 1,314 against 741).⁶ So the complete Holy League victory was not due to their overwhelming force. Their use of the galleasses and the removal of the galleys' beaks certainly contributed. So too did the discipline of holding fire. One of Don Juan's advisers had written to him: 'As to Your Excellency's query about whether the artillery in our fleet should fire first or whether to await the enemy's fire, this is my opinion that no heed should be taken of whether the enemy fires first or later, but that the gunners should hold their fire until Your Excellency gives the order.'⁷

Once the gunners had done their work and the soldiers were boarding the enemy ship or repelling boarders, the Holy League had further advantages: their ships had anti-boarding nets and boarders were easy targets as they struggled to get past them; the Spanish troops wielded long pikes that could pick off a swordsman before he could use his weapon; and the Holy League soldiers were protected by metal armour, the Turks only by cloth.

Finally, there was the imponderable but crucial factor of fighting spirit, which may have burned equally fiercely in the Holy League fleet and in the Turkish. Cervantes fought at Lepanto, where he lost the use of his left hand to

a bullet wound, and praised the boarding parties in a tribute that could apply to both sides: ‘When ships are locked and grappled together, the soldier has no more space left him than two feet of plank. Though he knows that at his first careless step he will go down to visit the deep bosom of Neptune, nevertheless with undaunted heart, sustained by the honour which spurs him on, he exposes himself as a mark for all their shot, and endeavours to pass along that narrow causeway into the enemy’s ship. And, most amazing of all, no sooner does one man fall, never to rise again this side of Doomsday, than another takes his place and if he, in his turn, falls into the sea, which lies in wait for him like an enemy, another, and yet another, takes his place, without a moment passing between their deaths: the greatest display of valour and daring to be found in all hazards of war.’⁸

Lepanto was fought in Greek waters, and many Greeks took part in the battle, on the ships of both sides but mainly on those of the Holy League. Three of the Venetian galleys were commanded by Greeks who had converted to the Catholic faith, two from Crete and one from Corfu. George Finlay in his 1877 history maintained that there were over 25,000 Greeks in the Holy League fleet as crew or oarsmen, and about 5,000 in the Turkish, so that their number ‘far exceeded that of the combatants of any of the nations engaged’.⁹ Did the existence of the Holy League, with a fleet containing many Greeks and intent on attacking the Turks, offer an opportunity for the Greeks in Greece? Could one of the Holy League member states be induced to support the Greeks in driving out the Turks? Some thought so, and even before Lepanto there were several Greek appeals for help to Spain or Venice, none of which was successful. The last of these appeals was to Venice from the leaders of the Mani in the southern Peloponnese.

In the summer of 1570 the independent Venetian fleet under Marco Quirini captured a Turkish fortress in the Mani, probably the one overlooking the tiny rocky harbour of Pórtο Káyio at the Mani’s southern tip. The Venetians soon left, and the Greeks of the Mani claimed that a chance had been missed to conquer the whole Peloponnese, so they called on Venice to return, promising their own aid.

As a result, a Venetian representative spent a few weeks in the Mani in March 1571 to discuss possible joint action, and at the end of his visit the Mani leaders sent their proposals to Venice. They nominated the principals of the campaign, a Venetian as leader and two Greeks as next in command. They claimed that, as a result of the raids they had already made on Turkish towns, ‘We have pillaged half the Peloponnese. We have burnt and destroyed and battled with the Turks, and with God’s help we have driven them from their homes and cut off their heads and put them to the sword in many places.’¹⁰ The Greeks offered to provide 400 fighting men and called on Venice to send 2,000. Then they made their own demands. Venice was to send weapons – 1,300 spears, 300 muskets, 300 breastplates – and money. If Venice was successful in taking over the Peloponnese, all inhabitants of the Mani were to

be exempt from taxes, and the leaders were to be given hereditary estates. But if the campaign failed Venice was to remove all the inhabitants to an unspecified place of safety, to avoid Turkish retribution. The proposal was left at the discretion of the Venetian admiral on the spot, but like the previous proposals the plan came to nothing.

This failed appeal of the Mani to Venice later came to be seen in a different light: as a broken promise by the Venetians to the Mani, paralleled by the broken promises of other powers. This view was strongly expressed in a document known as *The Chronicle of Galaxídhí*. It was written by a monk in 1703 – 130 years after the events described – but claimed to be based on contemporary sources. The *Chronicle* says: ‘I will tell you of an evil that occurred through the treachery of the Franks, who always opposed the Greek religion. They called on all Christians to take up arms and harass the Turks, and promised their support. The Greeks agreed that on land and sea they would attack the Turks, saying “We will either die or escape from slavery.” Then came the news that the Venetians were not fighting and the Franks were nowhere appearing, and were laughing at the Greeks and sending no help. On this news the Greek forces dissolved in disorder.’¹¹

This proposal by the Mani was not aimed at gaining independence for the Peloponnese but was intended to replace Turkish rule by a Venetian government that was supposed to be non-taxing – surely an oxymoron. But it is doubtful if rule by strict colonial governors from Catholic Venice would have brought any benefits to the Greeks. Furthermore the proposers of the plan wanted something for themselves – money, weapons, estates or tax-free status. Some Greek historians have seen these Greeks as early champions of Greek liberation: ‘They created in the inhabitants of Greece a confidence in the coming collapse of the Turkish occupier, forged the martial spirit and the revolutionary temper of the Greeks, and above all strengthened their vitality and their national consciousness.’¹² But the expulsion of the Turkish occupier was more than two centuries in the future. Greeks of the time ignored the fact that the Holy League had little interest in fighting the Greeks’ battles for them, and convinced themselves that the League had betrayed an opportunity for some vaguely imagined liberation from Turkish rule. Later Greeks attributed to their forebears exalted motives of altruism and patriotism, and to the Venetians base treachery.

A different perspective on Lepanto appears in Chesterton’s memorable rollicking poem ‘Lepanto’ of 1911, which gives vivid colour to stereotypical images of a sinister dissolute Sultan and a gallant debonair Don John, ‘the last knight of Europe’. Some of the poem’s details show Chesterton’s underlying purpose. He was already championing the Roman Catholic Church, though his formal conversion came ten years later. In the poem he disparages the Protestant north with its ‘cold queen of England’ where Protestants reject central tenets of the Catholic faith, or, as Chesterton puts it, ‘Christian hateth Mary that God kissed in Galilee’. Another line, where Don John is called

‘Death-light of Africa!’ had a contemporary relevance for Chesterton. In October of the year that ‘Lepanto’ was published Italy seized Libya, the last Ottoman territory in north Africa, and the treaty of the following year established the complete reconquest of the Ottoman Barbary states by Catholic Christian powers.¹³ So for Chesterton the Protestants had betrayed the Christian mission but the Catholics had gloriously maintained it at Lepanto, and were still doing so.

The Turkish reaction to their disastrous defeat at Lepanto was at first fatalistic. An immediate firman from Selim to his surviving commander Pertev Pasha said: ‘A battle can be won or lost. It was destined to happen this way according to God’s will.’¹⁴ But within a few days the grand vizier Sokollu was taking a more robust line, saying to the Venetian emissary in Constantinople: ‘In wresting Cyprus from you, we deprived you of an arm; in defeating our fleet, you have only shaved our beard. An arm when cut off cannot grow again; but a shorn beard will grow all the better for the razor.’¹⁵ And Sokollu’s grandiloquent instructions for rebuilding the fleet were: ‘If necessary we shall make anchors of silver, rigging of silk and sails of satin. If you lack anything for the equipment of a vessel, you have only to ask it of me.’¹⁶ By May 1572, only seven months after Lepanto, 150 Turkish ships had indeed been built, including eight similar to the Venetian galleasses, and though timber was unseasoned and crews and soldiers inexperienced the Turkish navy was ready to put to sea again.

In Venice and Spain and throughout Christian Europe the news of the victory of Lepanto was received with ecstatic rejoicing, and the battle was presented in a glorious light by painters and poets. But the fruits of victory proved hard to gather. On 1 May 1572 Pope Pius V died, and it is said that his prescient last words were: ‘If this year passes without some memorable action, men’s spirits will fail them and our labour and the great victory will be fruitless.’¹⁷ A Holy League fleet under Don Juan did sail in 1572. It twice tried to bring the Turkish ships to battle, once off the southern Peloponnese and once off Navarino, but on both occasions the Turks withdrew, showing a prudence that might have saved them from the disaster of Lepanto. Venice tried to keep the Holy League together, but papal crusading zeal had died with Pius V, and Philip of Spain was occupied with war in the Low Countries. Venice did not have the resources to continue the fight alone and, even if it had, this might have led to Turkish attacks on Venice’s Italian territories or on Crete. A year after Lepanto the captain-general of the Venetian fleet wrote to the Senate: ‘To have been leagued with allies has wrought the greatest injury to the Republic,’ and he concluded that, ‘He who has not good prospect of totally or in large measure destroying the enemy will be better advised to seek peace with him.’¹⁸ Thus in the following year, on 7 March 1573, Venice signed a humiliating peace treaty with Turkey that required Venice to pay a substantial indemnity of 300,000 ducats and make other concessions. The Venetian spirit that had led three years earlier to their firm rejection of the

Turkish ultimatum over Cyprus had indeed failed them. When Don Juan learned of the treaty he is said to have taken down the Holy League flag on his ship with his own hand and raised the banner of Spain in its place.

Don Juan achieved one last success, leading a Spanish fleet to seize Tunis in August 1573, but a year later it was lost again to the Turks, and five years later in 1578 Spain followed Venice in signing a truce with the Turks. Don Juan's last years were spent as governor-general of the Spanish Netherlands, which was in continuing revolt against its foreign rulers. He hated the country, calling it a 'Babylon of disgust' and lamenting that he was 'without a single person in whom I can confide'.¹⁹ His tenure lasted less than two years; he achieved little, and in 1578, aged only 31, he died of typhus.

The allied fleet of 1570 had failed to achieve its object of preventing the Turks from seizing Cyprus, and the Holy League of 1571 had failed in its wider purpose of making continuous war on the Turks. But Lepanto was significant because it broke the belief in Turkish invincibility at sea. Under Suleyman the Turks had reached their limits of expansion on land against Europe, and Lepanto showed that under Selim they had reached the limit by sea. From now on Turkish fleets were confined to the eastern Mediterranean, and though raiders of the Barbary coast remained a threat there were no longer fears of a Turkish fleet landing in Spain or anywhere else west of the Adriatic. From now on the Ottoman Empire came to be recognised as a power parallel to those of Europe, with whom European powers would fight if necessary – as they did with each other – but otherwise would cooperate, make commercial agreements and even form alliances. With Lepanto, the age of religion-inspired crusades came to an end.

Mainland Greece and Town Life

The 100 years from roughly 1550 to 1650 is perhaps the most opaque period of Greece's hidden centuries. We know little of the life of the people from the Greeks themselves. They did not write letters or keep diaries, and the only glimpses we get of their lives are from surviving popular songs and from the oral tradition, which is notoriously unreliable on facts though often illuminating on sentiments. Greek Church records are mainly concerned with the activities of the higher clergy and with monasteries, and tell us little of ordinary life. Apart from the useful population censuses, Turkish documents are largely inaccessible. Until recently western scholars have been refused access to them,¹ and even those who know Turkish and have been able to study them have had to cope with the unfamiliar high formal language in which they are written.

Also by the beginning of the seventeenth century the Italians had gone from the mainland and the Aegean islands. By 1540 the Turks had taken over Venice's mainland outposts at Navplion, Methóni, Koróni and Monemvasía, and all the islands of the Cyclades except for Venetian-held Tínos were under Turkish control. The Turks completed their dominance of the eastern Mediterranean with the conquest of Cyprus in 1570, and the only significant Venetian possessions remaining were Crete until 1669 and the Ionian islands for a further century. So outside those two areas Italian records can no longer help us.

Foreign residents in Greece were a rarity, limited to a few British or French consuls in major towns and some Jesuit or Capuchin priests. There were a few foreign travellers, though nothing to compare with the increasing numbers of those who came in the following century. But the seventeenth-century visitors usually had their own concerns, often archaeology or botany, or touched at Greece briefly on the way to somewhere else, as William Biddulph did en route to serve as Protestant chaplain at Aleppo. So these travellers often had little opportunity to observe Greek life, even if they had an interest in doing so.

In spite of these limitations there is enough evidence to give us a picture of Greek life in the towns of the period, which was strikingly different from life on the land as described in Chapter 4. As one historian puts it: 'The contrast which exists between the rural community and the city in every society was

rarely more striking than in the medieval Islamic world. Here it was not merely a contrast between isolation and congregation, between the dispersed economy of the village and the concentrated economy of the town, between oppressed poverty and relative freedom and wealth, between producer and consumer. It was a contrast of civilizations.’² One of the main contrasts was in the working day. The agricultural labourer, provided he paid his taxes, could work as he wished, whereas the townsman’s working life was tightly regulated through the guild system.

All craftsmen, that is those using local or imported raw materials to make goods and sell them, had to belong to a guild, for example the guild of furriers, potters, or producers of cloth or ironware. The leading members of the guild were the master craftsmen, who appointed four officers. One was elected from their own members to run the business side of the guild and represent his fellows in dealings with other guilds. Another was appointed to apportion the tax quota among the guild members and deliver the total to the government. He also represented the guild when taking grievances to the local capital or to Constantinople. A third officer acted as buying agent for the guild’s raw materials and a fourth was responsible for quality and price control. All four had to be selected before a guild could be registered. Only the master craftsmen could open their own establishments, of which the number was strictly limited. Below the master craftsmen and working for them were the skilled craftsmen who could not open their own shops, the ordinary craftsmen, and at the lowest level the apprentices.

The guilds would operate in and around the great market in the centre of town, which also typically included the main mosque, a major square and various institutions that were supported by charitable foundations, such as Islamic colleges, inns, public baths and fountains. Guild members, who might be Muslim and Christian in the same guild, did not live in the centre but in one of the self-contained quarters of the town. These usually contained 25 to 50 houses and Muslims, Greeks and Jews lived in different quarters. The division of a city into such quarters was of course common elsewhere, for instance in Siena where the 17 *contrade* districts, those which remain of the original 59, still fiercely contest twice a year the dramatic bareback horse race, the Palio, in the Piazza del Campo.

There were three important limitations on the guild’s activities. First, nothing could be sold above a price fixed by the government, which was designed to allow a modest profit of about ten per cent. Naturally this maximum became standard: to charge less would be to throw away profit, and would undercut and damage other guild members. Second, the guild could sell only the goods allowed to it. This meant that no guild could compete with another guild, but also that diversification was impossible. Third, strict quality control meant that the goods produced could never vary. In Constantinople even the sale of shoes with pointed toes was forbidden as being ‘against the ancient mode’.

The guild system was not unique to the Ottomans. It was inherited from the Byzantines, whose rules for the guilds of Constantinople were set down in the tenth century *Book of the Prefect*, and guilds operated throughout Europe, as described by Iris Origo in her account of the fourteenth-century merchant of Prato.³ The guild system had advantages both for the rulers, whether domestic or foreign, and for the ruled. It enabled the rulers to keep control of economic activity and sometimes to encourage it. The Ottomans have often been accused of taking no interest in trade, and of leaving it in the hands of others – Greeks, Jews, Armenians and foreign concessionaires. A more persuasive view is that the Ottomans were well aware of the importance of trade and of the cities where it flourished, and of course of taxing it. As one historian, Halil Inalcik, puts it: ‘The Ottoman economic mind was closely related to the basic concept of state and society in the Middle East. It professed that the ultimate goal of a state was consolidation and extension of the ruler’s power, and the only way to reach it was to get rich sources of revenues. This in turn depended on the conditions making the productive classes prosperous.’⁴

For the ruled, the guild system meant stability – of raw material supply, of quality and of price – and protection from competition. The guild control of commercial activity was not total. Some entrepreneurs operated outside it, in particular the merchants engaged in empire-wide export and import, and some operated illegally within it, acquiring against the regulations a number of shops. Nevertheless, stability was the main purpose of the guild system and its chief characteristic, though ultimately this stability spelt stagnation.

The guild system was a contributor to economic stagnation in Greece but was not its sole cause. The guild system flourished in other countries that were far from being stagnant, and guilds were long lived: in France until the French Revolution (in spite of an attempt by Turgot, Louis XVI’s reforming comptroller-general, to abolish them in 1776) and in England their privileges were not formally abolished until 1835. But Greece lacked opportunities that these and other countries exploited, principally trading by sea. The Ottoman Empire lost its main avenue of maritime trade – through the Red Sea to the Indian Ocean – to Vasco da Gama and the Portuguese in 1498, and thereafter largely left overseas trade to foreigners by the agreements known as capitulations. Greece itself had no substantial ships or the opportunity to use them until the second half of the eighteenth century. Furthermore Greece lacked a banking and market system, let alone a sophisticated one such as the Dutch, which as early as 1688 operated what we may think of as modern inventions: futures contracts, put and call options, and even investment related to a share index. Finally, Greece lacked education, without which development in any sphere was impossible.

The Turkish officials with whom the Greek townspeople had to deal were remarkably few, but given the extent of the Ottoman Empire that is hardly surprising. Towards the end of the seventeenth century the empire was divided into 39 major provinces, of which four were predominantly Greek:

Roumeli, which extended well north and west of today's Greece, with Thessalonika as provincial capital; the Peloponnese, capital Mistrás; Cyprus, capital Nicosia; and after its conquest Crete, capital Iráklion. The provincial governor, the voyvoda, had in theory eight officers to assist him, although not all the posts were always filled. The highest in rank was the treasurer. Two others were in control of troops, one for the provincial capital and one for the rest of the province. Three officers registered land holdings. The remaining two were responsible for carrying out sentences passed either by the provincial governor or by an official quite separate from the governor's administration, the kadi or judge. There was a kadi not only in the provincial capital but in each district. His remit was limited to major crimes and to disputes between Muslims and Christians. All other matters were dealt with in Greek courts controlled by the Orthodox Church.

Under this overriding Turkish rule there were self-governing Greek organisations in the towns, even in quite small ones. These organisations varied from place to place, and were often preservations from Byzantine times. They were largely drawn from leading members of the guilds, who were usually the richest and most influential figures in the Greek community now that the large-scale landowners of Byzantine and Frankish times had disappeared. In Thessalonika there was a committee of twelve, the *dhodhekádha*, to run communal affairs and in particular to apportion the tax burden within the community by setting tax rates, just as a guild official apportioned taxes within the guild. There was a similar committee of twelve in Sérres, 70 miles to the north of Thessalonika; here the whole Greek community assembled with the clergy and elected 'twelve just, good, God-fearing men' to represent them.

A special case was the village of Métsovo, at the top of the highest pass on the offshoot of the Via Egnatia that leads to Iánnina, and so a control point for the movement of trade or troops. In winter travellers needed help through the snow and in summer protection from brigands. To secure the loyalty of Métsovo the Sultan in the mid-seventeenth century granted the village and its neighbours virtual self-government, in effect loosening their chains in order to bind them more firmly to the regime. The seven-man Métsovo committee consisted of a president plus other members respectively responsible for taxes, markets, churches, schools, water and the local militia.

These leaders of the Greek communities were initially a valuable safeguard of Greek liberty, preserving freedoms and privileges that dated back to Byzantine times and even, as some historians have maintained, to the city-states of Classical Greece. But in the course of time they came to be seen as simply agents of the Turkish rulers, and their Greek designation as *protóyeri*, community leaders, was replaced by the Turkish term *kochabashi*. As a popular song ironically put it: 'I was a *kochabashi* and notable of the land. From the rich I demanded money, from the poor as much again. And from a widow, a very poor widow, with a fine vineyard and an ample farm, five times

as much.’⁵ By the time of the struggle for independence in the nineteenth century these representatives of the Greeks were castigated as men ‘who, sharing the sentiments of the Turks, wish to oppress the people, and as the friends and companions of tyrants’⁶ or more pithily as simply uncircumcised Turks.

In the southern part of Greece most of the important towns were on or near the coast: Athens, Navplion (Venetian until 1540), Methóni and Koróni (Venetian until 1500), Pátras and Corinth. The exception was inland Mistrás, the Peloponnese provincial capital. North of the Gulf of Corinth Thessalonika and perhaps Vólos were the only major coastal towns. Others lay on important land routes: Iánnina and Lárisa on southward offshoots of the Via Egnatia, which linked Constantinople with the Adriatic, and Tríkala which became a military centre because it lay on the route of any Turkish army moving south. Smaller towns sometimes flourished because of a particular product or trade, such as Kastoriá for furs, fish and wine, Monastíri for textiles and Édhessa for dyeing.

Of all the Greek townships Thessalonika was the most important, as it had been under the Byzantines. Its location was unrivalled for trade overland because it lay on the crucial Via Egnatia, and for seaborne trade because of its fine harbour. In the sixteenth century Thessalonika’s harbour was described as being able to hold at least 300 vessels, and in the seventeenth ships were putting in at Thessalonika from as far away as England, Algeria and the Persian Gulf.

When in 1430 the Turks made their last and conclusive attack on Thessalonika the city refused to surrender, though it seems that many of the besieged were ready to do so. ‘They actually declared they were bent on handing over the city to the infidel,’ wrote Archbishop Simeón. ‘Now that for me was something more difficult to stomach than ten thousand deaths.’⁷ But the refusal to surrender led to thousands of deaths anyway, amid scenes of destruction paralleled 23 years later at the fall of Constantinople. By contrast, Iánnina in the same year 1430 surrendered to the Turks and was spared. From the attackers’ point of view to threaten destruction as the price of resistance made surrender attractive, which would save all the human and material costs of siege and assault. But to be credible the threat had to be carried out, and this brought its own costs. The ruined city was no longer economically productive, and had to be revived and repopulated.

The repopulation of Thessalonika was partly by Greeks: it is estimated that about 1,000 Greeks who had been captured when the city fell were ransomed on the Sultan’s initiative and returned to Thessalonika, as did others who had fled earlier. Muslims were also brought in and, by the time of the first surviving city census of 1478, made up nearly half the total population of 10,000. Even after the population exchange of 1923 there remained a Turkish quarter on the heights above the city. Until the Turks left in 1974 as a result of the Turkish invasion of Cyprus, one could still from that vantage point look

out over a Greek city and a Greek sea and feel that one was nevertheless in Turkey. But the most significant new arrivals were the Jews who had been expelled from Christian countries.

Expulsion of Jews was nothing new. In 1290 Edward I had expelled the Jews from England, reacting to popular resentment of the Jews because of their power as moneylenders. The expulsion of the Jews from Spain by Ferdinand II in 1492 was in part for the same reason, but was also driven by religious and political motives. A century earlier a wave of anti-Jewish riots in Spain had driven many Jews to be baptised as Christians and become *conversos*. These nominal converts, who still wielded great influence as financiers, were widely suspected of covertly continuing their old beliefs and practices; indeed, some did so openly. In 1449, in response to more anti-Jewish riots, a decree of 'purity of blood' was introduced in Toledo, banning all those of Jewish ancestry from municipal office in the city, a measure soon followed elsewhere. Finally in March 1492 Ferdinand ordered the expulsion within four months of all professing Jews in Spain and in the Spanish dominions of Naples, Sicily and Sardinia, and many *conversos* left with them, an exodus of between 120,000 and 150,000 people.

Significantly, the expulsion of the Jews came less than three months after the Spanish conquest of Granada and the final expulsion of the Moors. Thus the year 1492 presented an opportunity for Ferdinand to remedy the total lack of political unity between Castilians, Aragonese and Catalans by imposing an unsullied religious unity. Spain would be Christian, with no place for the Muslim or Jewish faith. To be Spanish was to be Catholic, just as to be Greek was to be Orthodox. But, as many Spaniards had foreseen, the expulsion was economically disastrous, depriving Spain of the Jews' much-needed capital and skills. Whereas in England in 1290 there were English moneylenders to replace the Jews, in Spain they were replaced by foreigners from Holland, Germany or Genoa, ready to exploit rather than enrich Spain. But Spain's loss was the Ottoman Empire's gain. The expulsion and welcome of the Jews provides a striking contrast between Christian persecution and Muslim tolerance, and in economic terms between western Europe's short-sightedness and sound Ottoman investment.

When expelled Jews reached Thessalonika they found no Jewish inhabitants because the Jewish community, which had been there since Byzantine times, had been moved to repopulate Constantinople after 1453. But in a few decades the new arrivals had become dominant: the census of 1530 shows a Jewish population of some 16,000, over half the total population and so greater than the roughly equal Muslim and Christian numbers combined. The Jews felt warmly welcome. 'Come and join us in Turkey,' wrote one from Constantinople, 'and you will live, as we do, in peace and liberty,' and another from Thessalonika wrote that 'The Jews of Europe and other countries, persecuted and banished, have come here to find a refuge and this city has received them with love and affection, as if she were

Jerusalem, that old and pious mother of ours.’ The French commercial agent in Thessalonika described their contribution to the city: ‘The Jews have among them workmen of all artes and handicraftes moste excellent, and specially those of late banished and driven out of Spain and Portugale, who to the great detriment and damage of the Christianitie, have taught the Turkes divers inventions, craftes and engines of warre, as to make artillerie, harquebuses, gunne powder, shot and other munitions; they have also there set up printing, not before seen in those countries.’⁸

One skill that the Jews brought to Thessalonika was metallurgy. This was put to work in the mines at Sidhirokávsia, which produced mainly silver but also some gold. The site has now disappeared but was in hilly country about 40 miles east of Thessalonika and a few miles from the sea. Streams supplied water, and the surrounding woods provided timber for the smelting kilns, of which there were reputedly 5,000 or 6,000. Under Jewish instruction many Greeks worked there, but the miners were mainly Bulgarians. At its peak around 1600 the mines produced eight and a half tons of silver a year, but by the end of the seventeenth century the silver deposits had been exhausted and Sidhirokávsia, once so bustling, had fallen into decay.

The main occupation of the Jews of Thessalonika was in the production of woollen cloth. Their trade was given stimulus and stability when soon after their arrival they were given the contract to supply all janissary uniforms. Wealthy Jews bought local wool and imported dyes, and poorer Jews provided the labour. Thessalonika became one of the main exporters of cloth in the eastern Mediterranean in the sixteenth century. But by the end of the century the Thessalonika wool trade was facing two pressures: one was rising wool prices because Venetian and French merchants were buying up Balkan wool for their own industries, and by 1600 the price of wool had peaked at over ten times its 1530 level. The other pressure was a squeeze on the price of finished goods. This price was controlled by the Ottoman authorities, but more serious was competition from cheaper English goods: ships of the English Levant Company, in the Mediterranean on the way to buy raw silk in Persia, were carrying on the outward voyage any goods that could be sold at even a small profit. The cloth industry of the Thessalonika Jews never again achieved its sixteenth-century prominence. Nevertheless the Jews remained a flourishing element of Thessalonika life until the atrocious events of 1943, when some 45,000 Jews, virtually all of those in the town, were deported by the Germans, most to their deaths in the gas chambers.

One might ask why the Greeks had not taken the opportunity to prosper, especially through the cloth trade that the Jews had so quickly exploited. There were perhaps two main reasons. The Greeks were traders rather than manufacturers; and the Jews brought with them from their original homelands skills and techniques that the Greeks had had no opportunity to learn.

Whereas Thessalonika was important as a commercial centre, Athens was of interest for its antiquities. It was hardly ever visited in the sixteenth

century, so travellers' accounts of it appeared regularly only in the seventeenth. In the 1670s there was a sudden burgeoning of accounts of contemporary Athens: from the Jesuit priest Jacques-Paul Babin, from the Marquis de Nointel, ambassador to Constantinople, from Jean Giraud, the long-serving French consul in Athens who played host to many visitors, and from both Jacob Spon (French) and George Wheler (English), who travelled together to study antiquities.

There was another curious work of that time, *Athènes ancienne et nouvelle* by André Georges Guillet, published in 1675. It was very popular, both in French and in English translation and until challenged, especially by Spon, was accepted as genuine. It purported to be based on a firsthand account by Guillet's brother, the Seigneur de la Guilletière, who had visited Greece after being captured by the Turks, sold to a Tunisian pirate and eventually released – a suitably dramatic provenance for the book. But almost certainly this brother did not exist, and Guillet got some of his information from Capuchin monks in Navplion and invented the rest. Some of his observations were scurrilous, for example about the French consul Giraud, and he frequently mocked the Greeks. In the end we cannot trust a word he said, and he is worth quoting only to show how the Greeks were presented in one of the most widely disseminated accounts of them.

The population of Athens in the 1530s had been less than half that of Thessalonika, about 12,500 against 30,000, and its composition was very different. Whereas at that time Thessalonika's inhabitants were roughly half Jews and a quarter each Greeks and Muslims, the Athenians were almost exclusively Greek, with only some dozens of Muslim residents apart from the transient Turkish garrison of a few hundred soldiers. The total population barely changed in the following centuries, though by the 1670s the proportion of Muslims had increased to about a quarter, and some Albanians, generally considered troublemakers, had settled in the town and the surrounding villages.

Apart from the Akropolis there was nothing remarkable about the town of Athens. The Jesuit priest Jacques-Paul Babin, visiting in 1672, was surprised to find that the town had no defensive walls. The streets were narrow and unpaved, like those of a village. The houses, he said, lacked magnificence, and were haphazardly built from ancient ruins, ornamented only with bits of marble column or stones marked with a cross from ruined churches. But at least the houses were built of stone, unlike the wooden houses that Babin had seen in Constantinople. The most attractive part of Athens was the surrounding plain, planted with vines, corn and the olive trees that, standing 'so thick to the west of the city that they seem to be a wood', provided the main export from Athens. The vines, however, produced wine that de la Guilletière typically described as disgusting – 'blackish and not fine'.⁹

The Turkish government in Athens was represented, as elsewhere, by the voyvoda or governor living in the Akropolis, the kadi or judge, and the

Akropolis garrison commander and his few hundred troops with their families. The garrison's main task was to raise the alarm when sea raiders approached. Athens, wrote Wheler, 'hath no Walls to defend it self, in so much that they have been frequently surpriz'd by the Pirates from Sea, and sustained great Losses from them: until some Years since, they secured all the Avenues into the Town by Gates, which they built anew, and made the outmost Houses, lying close together, to serve instead of Walls. These they shut up every night: and are by them reasonably well secured from these Corsairs.'¹⁰ The garrison soldiers were referred to as janissaries, but according to de la Guilletière they were in fact the dregs of the Turkish militia, with small local businesses that they operated when off duty.

The visitors' impressions of the Athenians were widely variable. De la Guilletière, dismissive as usual, remarked on 'the dullness and muddiness of the Genius of the Modern Greeks', and the Marquis de Nointel scorned them as 'surrounded in ruins and ignorance'. But a more usual view, as expressed by George Wheler, was that 'their bad Fortune hath not been able to take from them what they have by Nature; that is, much Subtlety, or Wit.'¹¹ Athens had one of only three public schools – as opposed to church seminaries – in the Ottoman domains, the other two being at Sinop on the Black Sea and at Constantinople. The Athenians had a representative committee of eight, like those in Thessalonika and elsewhere, and the committee successfully pursued Greek grievances at Constantinople.

Athenian subtlety and wit could become ridiculous, according to de la Guilletière. He claimed to have listened to a long harangue by an educated monk declaring that all the world's achievements were in fact Greek. According to this monk Turkish successes were due to the Greeks because the janissaries recruited through the devshirme were Greek (well, some of them). Even the Sultans were Greeks because the father of Osman, the first of the line, was a Byzantine prince. Somewhat paradoxically, the monk also blamed western Europe for not uniting to defeat those same Greek-descended Turks.

The visitors discovered a sharp intellect in the Athenians partly because that was what they expected to find. St Paul had said that the Athenians 'spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing', and surely, the visitors thought, the descendants of Plato and Aristotle must be clever. But it was the monuments and remains of antiquity that dominated the travellers' perceptions, above all the Akropolis, which to this day remains both an architectural wonder and a powerful icon. When in 1834 Athens became the capital of independent Greece the Akropolis became the symbol both of the city and of the new state, a role for which it was uniquely appropriate. It was a Greek building as opposed to the Italian architecture of the previous capital, Navplion. It was visible for miles around. Most importantly, it was a summary in stone of Greek history, built by the genius of ancient Greece, converted from a pagan temple to an Orthodox church by the Byzantines, to a Catholic cathedral by the Franks and to a mosque by the

Turks. It had been wrecked in 1687 by a Venetian cannon shot, and later despoiled by Elgin and others. In short, the Parthenon was a continuing memorial to both the achievements and the vicissitudes of Greece throughout the centuries.

The Greek Church

For anyone brought up in the Anglican tradition of the Church of England, the Greek Orthodox Church is at first sight quite familiar. There is a similar hierarchy of archbishops, bishops, senior clergy and parish priests. As in England, great churches are found in Greek towns, and village churches dot the Greek countryside, though the architecture and decorations of the churches of the two faiths are interestingly different. Both Anglicans and Orthodox attach great importance to their services for baptism, marriage and funerals, and both celebrate Christmas and Easter in splendid and often colourful ceremonies. Both Churches have originally separated from the Roman Catholic Church, which they continue to view with wariness if not antipathy, although the immediate causes of the original split – the *filioque* phrase for the Greeks, Anne Boleyn for the English – could hardly have been more dissimilar.

Beneath the similarities, however, there are major differences. In Greek Orthodox services the congregation plays little active part, aside from a few responses such as to the priest's 'Chrístos anésti' ('Christ is risen') at Easter. There is no recitation or chanting of psalms, no cheerful or even boisterous singing of hymns as in an Anglican service. The priest alone conducts the Greek service, and for the members of the congregation the important thing is their presence, pious for some and perhaps social for others, rather than their overt participation. Moreover the sermon, such a central part of many Anglican services, is less important in a Greek church, and this points to another difference: the Greek Church puts relatively less emphasis on moral guidance and instruction, on sin, guilt and redemption, or on good works and social justice.

This derives from the Orthodox tradition, dating from Byzantine times, of the true purpose of religion: communion with God. The tradition stems from the monks, clerics and mystics of the early Church, and is based on prayer. One of the earliest of the Church fathers, Evagrius of Pontus, laid down in the late fourth century what not to do when praying: do not try to visualise God, either within you or outside you. 'Do not think', he wrote, 'of the divinity in you when you pray nor let your intellect have the impression of any form. You must go as immaterial into the immaterial, and you will understand.'¹

The most common metaphor for true communion with God was through the

experience of Light, not earthly light but Divine Light. Another fourth-century monk and later bishop, St Gregory of Nazianzus, wrote of being carried by heavenly contemplation into the secret darkness of the heavenly tabernacle to be blinded by the Light of the Trinity. The metaphor was challenged in the fourteenth century by the theologian Barlaam of Calabria, who wrote: 'I must confess that I do not know what this Light is. I only know that it does not exist.' He was answered by his contemporary Gregory Palamas, who saw God's grace as necessary for experiencing this Light. 'He who participates in this grace', he wrote, 'becomes himself to some extent the Light. He is united to the Light and by that Light he is made fully aware of all that remains invisible to those who have not this grace. The pure in heart see God Who, being Light, dwells in them and reveals Himself to those that love Him.'² If prayer is to lead to this experience it must be one that is as simple and undistracting as possible, exemplified by the prayer dating from the earliest church and known as the Jesus Prayer. This consisted simply of the words 'Kyrie eleison' ('Lord have mercy on us'), or the single words 'God', 'Lord' or 'Jesus' constantly repeated.

In view of these differences it is not surprising that there can be a gulf of incomprehension between the Church of England, young (less than 500 years old) and much concerned with behaviour, and the Orthodox Church with its much longer history and ultimately based on contemplation.

However, there is another Orthodox tradition that seems to run directly counter to this, and can also surprise Anglicans. This is the involvement of the Greek clergy in politics, not in this case political issues, such as campaigns against injustice or poverty, but political office. In the chaotic Greek conditions at the end of 1944 Archbishop Dhamaskinós became for fifteen months the Regent of Greece as a result of a hurriedly summoned conference in Athens, chaired by Churchill, in an unheated room lit only by hurricane lamps. This was in spite of Churchill's earlier expression of the traditional Anglican distrust of the clergy in politics, calling Dhamaskinós 'a pestilent priest, a survival from the Middle Ages'. Some years later, when Cyprus became independent in 1959, it was another archbishop, Makários, who was elected as first president of the new republic.

This political tradition too goes back to Byzantine times, when there was a debate, lasting throughout the Byzantine centuries and ultimately inconclusive, about the relative positions of the Emperor and the patriarch. The ideal was unruffled harmony between them: at the end of the ninth century the Emperor Leo VI, in a statement drafted by the patriarch, maintained that 'the state, like man, is formed of members, and the most important are the Emperor and the patriarch. The peace and happiness of the empire depends on their accord.'³ But who took precedence if the accord broke down? One of the early church fathers, St John Christóstomos, had maintained that 'the domain of royal power is one thing and the domain of priestly power another; and the latter prevails over the former.'⁴ But there

were occasions when the Emperor replaced the patriarch, though the appointment of the patriarch was officially in the hands of the Holy Synod, and other occasions when the patriarch excommunicated the Emperor. Though the debate was never conclusively resolved it was accepted that the patriarch had a crucial political role as well as a general spiritual one.

As we have seen in Chapter 3, the patriarch's political function continued after the fall of Constantinople to the Turks. In some ways it was extended. The patriarch was now responsible to the Ottoman authorities for the good behaviour of his flock and for ensuring that they paid their taxes to the state. These patriarchal powers and responsibilities were not limited to the Greek members of his church. They extended in principle to all the Orthodox churches that then or later were part of the Ottoman Empire: the patriarchates of Alexandria, Jerusalem and Antioch and the Slav Orthodox Churches within the empire, and outside it even the Russian, albeit nominally. Patriarchal rather than Turkish courts were to deal with all cases where only the Orthodox were involved, an adaptation of the Byzantine system of episcopal courts for cases involving clergy. The church was also responsible for education. But there was no longer any question of patriarch and secular ruler being equal, let alone of the patriarch being pre-eminent. The patriarch was a servant of the state of which the Sultan was the head.

During the centuries of Ottoman rule the Orthodox Church had three principal functions. It was specifically given the responsibility for education. It took upon itself the task of preserving the Greek language unchanged. And it was assigned the role, perhaps more retrospectively than at the time, of maintaining Greek identity, or – to avoid that elastic and disputed term – the Greeks' sense of what it meant to be Greek.

The purpose of medieval Greek education was not to provide vocational training in the skills of different trades, and still less to give pupils an understanding of the wider world. It was designed to prepare a few for the priesthood, and the many simply to be able to follow the church services. Education might be free from interference by the Ottoman rulers, but it was constrained by the limitations that the Church itself imposed. Thus for higher education there was only the Patriarchal Academy in Constantinople to train the clergy, and it concentrated naturally enough on Church doctrine. Other academies may have been set up later in large cities such as Thessalonika, but we know little of them and they seem to have been short lived.

Otherwise there was only teaching in the villages, and it is an enduring myth that these classes had to be held in secret. Greeks of today still remember the children's rhyme beginning '*Phengaráki mou lambró*':

Little moon, so bright and cool,
Light me on my way to school,
Where to study I am free,
And God's word is taught to me.

Why, the mystified child would ask, should it be the moon which lights the way to school, and the child would be told that because of Turkish oppression children had to creep from their homes at night to learn their language and religion secretly from the local *papás*.

Unlike most myths, this one has a known origin. In 1888 Nikólaos Gízis exhibited a painting, still widely reproduced, entitled 'A Greek School in the Time of Slavery (*Dhoulía*)'. It showed a priest in a candle-lit church crypt teaching a surrounding group of children, a composition of dominant adult and obedient youngsters that Gízis often used. Some ten years later Iánnis Polémis published a poem based on this picture, and gave his poem the title 'The Secret School'.⁵ The poem has a stirring conclusion. From Christ's image in the dome of the church, it proclaims, and from the immortal works of ancient Greece, and out of the enforced silence of slavery's noose around the neck,

A deep and resonant psalm is heard, as from another world,
And each one trembles as the priest, in strong prophetic voice,
Cries 'Do not live in the shadows, do not let darkness win,
For freedom like the morning star will bring the end of night.'

That the school had to be secret is no more than implied in the text of the poem and 'Secret School' is explicit only in the title. It seems that it was the wish to believe that schools had to be secret, as further proof of Turkish tyranny, rather than any evidence for them, which prompted generations of Greeks to accept the story. The myth has been an enduring one: until a few years ago secret schools featured in history lessons for primary- and secondary-school pupils, and only when they reached university were they taught that secret schools had never existed. The reality was much more mundane: village classes were held at night because the children, and probably often the *papás* too, were working in the fields all day.

Reports of the state of education in Greece, from Greeks and foreigners alike, were universally gloomy. It was hardly flourishing to start with. Yennádhios himself wrote, 'The state of education is pitiable,' and lamented that priests were few in number, and that even those were unfit and uneducated.⁶ A century after the fall of Constantinople Martin Crusius wrote: 'In all Greece studies nowhere flourish. They have no public academies or professors, except for the most trivial schools in which the boys are taught to read the Horologion, the Octoëchon, the Psalter, and other books which are used in the liturgy. But amongst the priests and monks those who really understand these books are very few indeed.'⁷ Crusius received a letter from an official of the patriarchate estimating the total number of Greek students: ten in Constantinople, four in Chíos, twenty in the Peloponnese, and barely fifty in all the Greek communities put together.

It was Italy, and in particular Venice and Padua (part of the Venetian Empire from 1406) that kept Greek education alive. In the decades after the

fall of Constantinople, as most of Greece came under Ottoman rule, Venice became a magnet for Greek students, mainly of course from Venetian Crete and Cyprus. In 1500 Venice established a new academy for humanist studies, to teach exclusively in Greek, and a third of the scholars were Greeks. Cardinal Vissarion (Bessarion), a fifteenth-century Orthodox bishop who converted to Catholicism, left his library of some 800 Greek books to the Venetian state. Manutius and others in Venice printed books in Greek. In Padua the university, founded in 1222, was famous for medical and philosophical studies, and a professorship of Greek was established there in 1463. Padua has been called the *alma mater* of the entire captive Greek nation.

The great difference between the Italian city-states and Greece was that in Italy education was state funded. The state needed the doctors and lawyers that the universities produced, and universities were supported by special taxes, in Rome on imported wine, in Padua, bizarrely, on prostitutes. By contrast the Greek Church was chronically short of money for education. The effect can be seen in a letter from a teacher in Iánnina at the end of the seventeenth century, who wrote: ‘Three years have now gone by, and no money has arrived at our school. I want to leave. I am unable to work, borrow or eat.’⁸

It was money that began to revive Greek education in the later eighteenth century, money that came from the increasingly prosperous Greek merchants. This prosperity was a result of the treaties that ended the Russian–Turkish war of 1768–74, which gave Greek merchant ships access to the Black Sea, and merchants on land freedom to trade in all the Habsburg territories. During the Napoleonic wars blockade-running also proved lucrative. Merchants not only had the means to promote education, but also could appreciate its value when handling complicated international trade and dealing with sophisticated foreigners. But this meant a revolution in education: it had to become secular, not church bound.

The results were obvious to the Reverend William Jowett when in 1818 he visited the Greek school at Kidhoniés on the Anatolian coast. The school had been established fifteen years earlier, and had 200 students, a library of over 7,000 books, and many scientific instruments. Jowett attended a class in which the teacher was explaining Newtonian astronomy, as part of a three-year course. ‘I liked the pupils’ practice of putting questions to him,’ wrote Jowett, ‘though some asked very absurd ones,’ and he concluded that ‘the scientific part of education in Greece is evidently in its infancy.’⁹

As revolution approached, the westernised Greek intelligentsia began to see education as the necessary key to success. The French Revolution, said Adhamántios Koraís, was the result of education, and a Greek revolution too would be based on it. Kapodhístrias, first president of independent Greece, wrote that the Greeks should devote themselves exclusively to education, declaring that ‘All other object is vain, all other work is dangerous.’¹⁰ But for Koraís the purpose of education was to inspire the young with the glories of

the past, and for Kapodhístrias education was primarily about moral teaching. For neither was it the very limited education that the Church had more or less preserved for the previous four centuries.

These limitations of church education are to some extent understandable. The Church did not see its function as providing training in skills – that was the job of the multifarious trade guilds – nor in equipping the young for material advancement in any sphere. Nor did it have any interest in the wider teaching of philosophy or science, which could undermine religious belief. Its mission was the maintenance of Orthodoxy, and a crucial part of this was the preservation of the Greek language in its original form.

The language to be preserved was *koiné* (kiní) a form of the Attic Greek used by the great prose writers and dramatists of the fifth century BC, adopted by Philip of Macedon, and spread by his son Alexander. It became the lingua franca of the Greek world, and is the language of the Greek New Testament and of the liturgy of the Greek Church up to present times.

Anyone who glances through these *koiné* writings and knows some Ancient Greek will find familiar features. Ancient and *koiné* Greek are very close, and English schoolboys studying Ancient Greek used to be encouraged to follow the chapel readings from the New Testament in the *koiné* version, thus combining secular with religious education. In this version one finds, for example, *ouk* instead of modern *dhen*, *gar* for *epidhí*, and the elegantly succinct *men . . . de* for ‘on the one hand . . . on the other hand’. The long defunct optative occasionally appears, and in the Beatitudes, detailing the rewards that the virtuous shall receive, all the ‘shall’s are in the old one-word inflected future, not *tha* with a form of the present.

The church was intent on preserving these ancient forms of Greek, and when in 1638 a version of the New Testament in contemporary Greek was published abroad the Church quickly had it suppressed. There was one ancient word that the Church was especially concerned to keep: *ichthís* for fish, still to be found on the signs above fishmongers’ shops. The fish had been the covert symbol of the early Christians, not only because the disciples had been called to be fishers of men, but also because the letters of *ichthís* formed an acronym for Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour.

Contrast the linguistic conservatism of the Greek Church with the attitude of the Church of England. When the 1552 prayer book came to be revised in 1662, the revisers declared in the preface: ‘It hath been the wisdom of the Church of England to keep the mean between the two extremes, of too much stiffness in refusing, and of too much easiness in admitting, any variations.’ They went on to say that the aim of the new version was ‘the more proper expressing of some words or phrases of ancient usage in terms more suitable to the language of the present times.’ It is a mark of their success that the 1662 version lasted virtually unchanged for another three centuries. Language does not have to be ossified to be preserved.

For the Greek Church the old forms of the language were an essential part

of the Bible and the liturgy, but the patriarch also needed a language in which to speak to his flock on issues of the day. The Paternal Exhortation of 1798, enjoining obedience to the Sultan, is an example. The first part is in prose, deals with some complex theological issues, and uses many old forms. But the second part is a poem, in the galloping metre of a klephtic ballad. It uses very few old forms, and the message is much simpler: a ship has its captain, a house its master, bees accept the order of the hive, flocks follow the leading ram – likewise you should obey the Sultan. It is as if an Anglican archbishop, to make sure he was understood, concluded his sermon with some simple cautionary verses.

‘We deem it a great achievement of the Church, that she preserved a pure form of the Greek language down to recent times.’ So wrote the church historian Theodore Papadopoulos in the 1950s.¹¹ In the previous century Adhamántios Koraís, following Karl Schlegel and others, maintained that ‘Language is the nation.’ If you put those two statements together, you might conclude that it was the Church that preserved the Greek language through the centuries of Turkish rule, and by doing so preserved the Greek nation. But the deduction is, of course, not as simple as that. Language and nationality are not necessarily equivalent. As just one example, in the exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey after the 1922 catastrophe it was religion, not language, that determined who left and who stayed. In any case the question of which language is said to be the nation is debatable, and was indeed debated hotly, especially in the nation-building nineteenth century. It has been variously argued that the nation is the ancient language, or the language of the common people, or even what Eric Hobsbawm calls ‘a sort of platonic idea of the language, existing behind and above all its variant and imperfect versions’.¹²

Others than the Church have been credited with the preservation of the Greek language in a less rigid form. There were the composers of popular ballads, as used by the patriarch himself for mass communication. There were the phanariots, the Greeks of the higher Ottoman civil service, using Greek in their communications and valuing education as their own passport to influence. Steven Runciman went so far as to say: ‘It was thanks to the Phanariots more than to anyone else that Hellenism was able to survive.’¹³ And there were the ordinary Greeks, passing on the language from generation to generation, in different dialects but still recognisably Greek. However, these others contributed to the preservation of Greek almost by accident, and only the Church did so by design.

There were other ways in which the Church can be said to have preserved Hellenism. One was by constant preaching against conversion to Islam, but it is not easy to determine how much of a threat such conversion actually was. Conversions may have been most common among country peasants, because their Orthodoxy was basically a folk religion, concerned with fertility, health, the weather and incorporating ancient pagan rites. To such people the

travelling Muslim dervishes, present mainly in northern Greece, were very attractive. The dervishes also offered a folk religion, their rites too being connected with the basic factors of rural life. The dervishes, like the Orthodox, emphasised prayer and contemplation, leading to a mystic understanding of Allah. Dervish leaders after their death might be venerated like Christian saints and credited with miraculous powers. The transition from folk Christianity to folk Islam would have been easy.

Throughout the centuries of Turkish rule there were cases, evidenced in the kadi courts, of Orthodox Greeks converting to Islam for personal reasons, often to do with the marriage of a Christian woman to a Turk. There is little evidence of mass conversion except, as we shall see, in the special case of Crete. Some Orthodox preachers believed that Christians converted simply to avoid the Christian poll tax. An example was the early eighteenth-century preacher Nektários Térpos, who fiercely told the apostatising members of his flock: 'Because of some small financial need you separate yourselves from the sacred and pure faith of Christ and go to eternal Hell.'¹⁴ Conversion came at a high social price in this world, quite apart from a theological price in the next. It meant exclusion from the Orthodox rites celebrating birth, marriage and death, exclusion from the great Orthodox celebrations, and exclusion from the wider social group extending from the family to the whole local community. Above all it meant abandoning the Greeks' badge of difference from their alien Muslim rulers.

The service of the Orthodox Church to the Greek people was therefore limited, in a number of ways. The education it promoted was confined to religious teaching, and even that was often not enough to provide educated priests. The language it preserved was an ancient form different from the language of the people. It devoted itself to condemning conversion to Islam, which was perhaps not a widespread danger. Apart from the limitations on what the Church did do, there are things about which the Church did little. The Church rarely protested against injustices committed by the Turkish authorities. Charitable work done by monasteries was limited – a theologian has recently placed it last in the list of monastic purposes¹⁵ – though the sixteenth-century patriarch Ieremías II had declared that 'They sin who hope to be saved by faith alone, without right actions.'¹⁶

The question of the relationship between faith and behaviour was one that exercised one of the most innovative and controversial patriarchs, Kírillos I Loukárís, patriarch between 1620 and 1635 and briefly again for the year before his death in 1638. He had seen more of the world than most patriarchs, having been head of the Orthodox Church in Alexandria, having worked with the Orthodox in Poland, and having friendly contacts with the Protestants of Holland. Loukárís' first aim was to improve education. He reformed the Patriarchal Academy and put at its head a Padua-educated Greek who introduced more secular teaching. To provide books for the academy he set up a printing press in Constantinople, but some of its output was anti-Catholic

and Jesuits successfully intrigued for its destruction. Undeterred, Loukaris turned to the printing presses of Geneva, which published his translation of the New Testament into modern Greek, with the original in parallel, but this provoked a storm of disapproval from his bishops.

The main source of disagreement between Loukaris and the Orthodox was his *Confession of Faith*, also published in Geneva. In this he declared that man is justified by faith alone; right actions cannot ensure salvation, though they are not to be neglected since they testify to faith. This was a subtle but distinct difference from the doctrine of his predecessor Ieremías II that faith alone is not enough because faith without right actions is dead. Moreover Loukaris controversially maintained that the Eucharist bread and wine represented, but did not become, the body and blood of Christ, and that sacred images such as those of saints could be admired but not venerated.

Thus Loukaris was at odds with various parts of his flock not only over his modernising efforts but also on three important points of doctrine: faith and behaviour, transubstantiation and holy images. He was deposed by the Holy Synod in 1635, anathematised as a heretic by an Orthodox council in 1636, nevertheless reinstated in 1637, but through Catholic intrigues was accused of treason against the Sultan and assassinated in prison in 1638. It was a tragic end to the patriarchate of a man who might have done much for the Orthodox Church.

The Church was regularly described as short of money, even though in the seventeenth century a wealthy phanariot paid off all the debts of the patriarchate and reorganised its finances. The poverty of the Church is often blamed on increasing payments by patriarchs to the Turkish treasury, both on accession and annually while in office. It seems that the patriarchate never found a strong enough negotiating position with Turkish authorities to get these payments reduced. Nevertheless these payments can only have been a small proportion of the wealth – in taxes on the Orthodox and from land – that the Church commanded. The patriarchate had in many ways become involved in secular matters, but had failed to acquire the most important secular skill: managing its own money.

One distraction for the Church was the frequent change of patriarch, each change, including reinstatement of a former patriarch, involving a payment to the Turkish treasury. The early years under Turkish rule were relatively stable: between 1495 and 1595 there were nineteen patriarchal reigns, with few reinstatements. The turmoil was at its worst in the following century. Between 1595 and 1695 there were 61 patriarchal reigns but only 31 different patriarchs, so reinstatements were constant. Reigns were also often pathetically short: in 1679 Athanásios reigned for only ten days, others for less than a year, and the average length of reign was less than twenty months. Thereafter the situation somewhat improved, the period 1695 to 1795 covering 31 reigns by 23 different patriarchs. These constant changes are often ascribed broadly to intrigues by the Turks who, it is claimed, simply

wanted to maximise the number of patriarchal payments on accession. But it takes two to intrigue. Direct intervention by the Turkish authorities was rare, and normally it was the Holy Synod that elected or deposed a patriarch. So a change of patriarch was possible only with the acquiescence, if not the active involvement, of the Church's own electors.

Intrigues were happening not only between the Holy Synod and the Turks but within the Holy Synod itself. The Synod, and indeed the higher clergy as a whole, were involved in long-running and fiercely contested arguments about matters of doctrine, and factions formed around opposing views. The contested matters were not only the continuing *filioque* debate about whether the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father *and* the Son, but also the questions of predestination, the necessity of both faith and works, the existence of purgatory, and the listing of the three theological virtues and the seven deadly sins. Two matters were especially hotly debated. One was the doctrine of *epíklisi* or invocation, disputed for 50 years between 1640 and 1690. The argument was about whether the change of the communion bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ was effected only by the invocation of the Holy Spirit, or occurred when the words of Christ, beginning 'Take, eat, this is my Body', were said. The other controversial topic was the need for rebaptism of converts to Orthodoxy, for example of Greeks from Venetian territories baptised as Catholic but now accepting Orthodoxy. An early Church council of 1484 had ruled that such converts needed only to be reconfirmed, not rebaptised. But Catholic baptism was by aspersion, sprinkling of water, whereas Orthodox baptism was by immersion, so it was argued that the Catholic rite was not a true baptism and therefore rebaptism was necessary. It was also argued by some that Catholic baptism was not baptism at all, and that the convert must be baptised for the first time, not rebaptised. The debate was eventually settled in 1755 by a ruling of the patriarch that converts must be rebaptised, which remains the rule to this day.

Such arguments about theological niceties can seem bizarre in a secular age, and abstruse even to believers. But the tradition of passionate debate on such matters goes back to the early days of Christianity in Byzantium. A bishop who visited the city in the late fourth century wrote: 'Everything – streets, markets, squares, crossroads – is full of those who are speaking of unintelligible things. I ask how many oboli I have to pay; in answer they are philosophizing on the born or unborn; I wish to know the price of bread; one answers: "The Father is greater than the Son"; I inquire whether my bath is ready; one says, "The Son has been made out of nothing."¹⁷ Furthermore these arguments spring from the basic orientation of the Orthodox Church towards communion with God through worship. From this standpoint the forms of worship are central, and they are fiercely debated because they are vitally important.

Even after making allowances for the restrictions on the Church under Turkish rule it seems clear that the Church did less than it might have done in

the service of the faithful and of the Greeks as a whole. Education was largely neglected, there were few philanthropic initiatives, there was little attempt to make representations to the Turkish authorities on behalf of the Greeks, and the Church was preoccupied with questions of money, patriarchal succession and doctrinal controversy. The highest tribute to the Orthodox Church should probably be paid not to the upper hierarchy but to the Church's humblest servants, the local priests, and many would have deserved the praise of one historian for the *papádhes* of Crete: 'The real guardian of the villages was the ill-educated *papás*, like them wearing Cretan breeches and doing all the tasks in the fields, living an exemplary life with his family, adviser and leader of his fellow villagers, like a bird gathering beneath the wings of the Church its fledgling chicks.'¹⁸

Venetian Crete

Venice held Crete for four and a half centuries, much longer than any of its other possessions among the islands of the Mediterranean or on the mainland of Greece. In the division of territories in 1204 after the fall of Constantinople to the Fourth Crusade, Crete had gone to Boniface of Montferrat, ruler of Thessalonika, who sold it to Venice for 1,000 marks. But Genoa too coveted Crete, and in 1206 Genoese raiders seized the unfortified town of Iráklion and other Cretan territory, their leader Enrico Pescatore styling himself 'Dominus Creti'. After several unsuccessful attempts Venice finally ejected the Genoese in 1211, the start of continuous Venetian rule of Crete.

In the first two centuries of Venetian rule barely a decade passed without a Cretan revolt of some kind. Some Greek historians tend to lump these together, seeing them all as struggles for an unspecified freedom, and as expressions of national consciousness, a concept that acquired meaning only in the eighteenth century. Their argument can even become circular: the leaders of revolts had nationalist sentiments, therefore the revolts must have been inspired by nationalism, therefore the leaders must have had nationalist sentiments.

In fact there were many causes for these revolts. Some were simply low-level conflicts that led to widespread violence, and were sparked by the Venetians seizing land, horses or other livestock, or by an alleged Venetian insult to a Cretan girl. Some were inspired or supported by Crete's previous rulers the Byzantines, especially after the return of the Byzantine rulers to Constantinople in 1261, whose aim, never achieved, was to reunite Crete with the Byzantine Empire. A major revolt of 1363 had yet other origins: it was an attempt by the Venetians in Crete to break away from Venice and to form an independent Venetian Crete. The revolt was known as the rebellion of Áyios Títos, a tribute both to its Venetian leader Titus Venier and to the island's patron saint, who had supposedly been charged by St Paul with bringing Christianity to Crete. But within a year a Venetian fleet had restored the authority of the metropolis.

None of these revolts achieved any lasting result, and they were sometimes followed by savage Venetian reprisals. Many, however, ended with Venetian grants of privileges to the Cretans, or confirmation of existing privileges. A significant such grant came at the end of the long revolt of 1282–99, led by

the wealthy landowner Aléxios Kalléryis. The revolt was centred on the district of Milopótamos between Réthimnon and Iráklion, but spread to most of western Crete. In previous risings Kalléryis had sometimes supported rebels against the Venetians, sometimes Venetians against rebels, and his aim now was not to expel the Venetians – they were preferable as rulers, he believed, to Genoese or Catalans – but to carve out a semi-independent principality for himself under Venetian rule.



The Kalléryis revolt dragged on inconclusively until 1296 when a Genoese fleet attacked western Crete, captured Chaniá, and invited Kalléryis to join them. Kalléryis refused and this paved the way for the agreement of 1299, known as the Pax Alexii Callergi, which ended the revolt. Kalléryis himself did well out of the peace: estates he had lost were returned to him and new ones granted. There were some benefits too for the people of Crete. The different classes – nobles, their children and so on down the scale – were recognised and made permanent, so that nobody could be deprived of his status. It was promised that a Greek Orthodox bishop would be appointed for the first time, the choice to be agreed between Kalléryis and the Catholic archbishop. But though the agreement of 1299 is sometimes presented as a great advance for the people of Crete, the main beneficiary was undoubtedly Kalléryis himself. He was later referred to as the ruler (*avthéntis*) of Crete, and his name was inscribed in the Libro d’Oro of Venetian nobility, a unique privilege for a Cretan.

Though the Kalléryis revolt was centred on the prosperous northern region of Milopótamos, the most persistent cause of trouble to the Venetians was the rugged mountainous region round the port of Sphakiá, to which today’s

visitors, with aching knees, are returned by boat after descending the Samariá gorge. The men of Sphakiá were formidable fighters, and remained so, showing the same qualities outstandingly against the Germans in the 1940s. The Venetians held them in high regard, and in 1602 the Venetian provveditor-general wrote of them: 'They surpass all the other inhabitants of these parts. This is not only because they are manly in appearance, competent and agile with muscular bodies, robust, proud, daring and courteous in manner. What most distinguishes them is their keenness of spirit, their greatness of soul, and their unrivalled ability to handle arms, whether bow or musket, in which they are exceptional. That ultimately is why they are without doubt the most daring, the most virile and the noblest of the men on this island.'¹

The Venetian officials administering Crete were, from the beginning, essentially the same as those that Venice later established in Cyprus, and reflected the system in Venice itself. The head of the administration was a Venetian noble based in Iráklion with the title of Duke of Crete, assisted by two counsellors. Subordinate to them were the captains of each of Crete's regions, initially six and later reduced to four. Military command was exercised by the captain-general, and each of Crete's fortresses had its own commander. Superior to all of these, including the Duke of Crete, was the provveditor-general, at first appointed only intermittently in times of crisis but from 1569, when the Turkish threat to Cyprus had become obvious, the office was made permanent.

Both the provveditor-general and the Duke of Crete were appointed in Venice and sent out to Crete for only two years. Venice persisted with this policy in both Crete and Cyprus in spite of its obvious drawbacks. Probably this was in part because Venice was afraid that long-standing colonial administrators would build themselves a threatening power base, partly because candidates would not want to neglect for too long their political careers in Venice – and several provveditors-general later became Doge. The system has been a boon to historians because departing officials were required to leave on record a report on the island and recommendations for improvements. But the inevitable short-termism of the arrangement is clear from the protest of the citizens of Iráklion in 1629 against a proposed new water supply. Besides claiming that it was impractical and unaffordable, they objected that the time left for the current provveditor was too short to finish the scheme, and that no provveditor ever completed his predecessor's projects but preferred to start his own.

Venice had secured possession of Crete in 1211, and in the following years established control of the island through granting military fiefs to Venetians. These fief-holders were granted land that had been taken from local landowners or the Church, and in return had to provide troops, cavalry if the fief-holder was of a noble Venetian family and infantry if not. This was the near-universal system of both Christian and Ottoman rule in the period before

standing armies became established. In the first century of Venetian rule an estimated 10,000 Venetians were settled in Crete.

From about 1500 this system began to break down. Cretans were displacing Venetians by buying fiefs or subdivisions of them, and they began to occupy posts in the island's administration. By 1600 only 164 of the 964 fiefs in the Iráklion region were held by Venetians, the remaining four fifths by Cretans. In 1575 the reforming provveditor-general Giacomo Foscarini reported that most of these supposed providers of cavalry neither owned a horse nor knew how to ride, and when required to show their military credentials would simply borrow horses and put villagers on them. People gathered to watch this ridiculous display and threw rotten fruit and stones at the riders. Thus of the two aims of the fief system – to provide Venetian dominance of the island and the means to defend it – neither was any longer being achieved.

This movement, from initial Venetian dominance to later fusion of Venetian and Cretan interests, also happened in the relations between the Venetians and the Orthodox Church. At the start Venice abolished the Orthodox bishoprics, and the bishopric promised in 1299 after the Kalléryis revolt seems to have been short lived, if it was established at all. This meant that Orthodox priests had to go abroad to be ordained, either to the Venetian possessions in the Ionian islands where, curiously, Orthodox bishops were permitted, or to Ottoman territory. Some Orthodox priests were thought to practise without being ordained at all. But there was no ban on Orthodox churches, and by the seventeenth century there were 113 Orthodox churches on Crete and only 17 Catholic ones. In 1602 the provveditor-general Benedetto Moro wrote that Catholics and Orthodox often went to each other's churches, and that Venetian officials should make a point of attending Orthodox services to show solidarity with the Cretans. He also ruled that Catholic priests must not preach against Orthodoxy. In many ways the island had become – to borrow the title of one of the best books on Venetian and Ottoman Crete – a shared world.

A remarkable expression of these shared values was the so-called Veneto-Cretan renaissance of the last century of Venetian rule. In literature the most famous figure was Vitséntzos Kornáros, author of the *Erotókritos*, a romance in verse of nearly 10,000 lines from an Italian source but with the action transferred to ancient Athens. Anachronistically the poem contains a fight between a Cretan and a Turk, perhaps a reference to the battle of Lepanto. Of the Cretan artists of the period even the more prominent are little known outside Greece, with one exception: Dhoménikos Theotokópoulos, known as El Greco.

El Greco was born in 1541 in Iráklion, where he served his artistic apprenticeship. One of his earliest known works, perhaps an examination piece for joining the guild of painters, is of St Luke, the patron saint of artists, painting an icon of the Virgin and Child. The icon is in the traditional Byzantine style while the depiction of St Luke and his studio are Italianate. El

Greco was already blending the Byzantine past with the west European present.

El Greco was well established as an artist when at the age of 26 he left Crete for Venice. There he was strongly influenced by Titian and Tintoretto, and his 'The Purification of the Temple' painted while in Venice is wholly Italian in style. Three years later he moved to Rome, where he added Michelangelo to his list of exemplars. But his stay in Rome was a mere eighteen months, and in 1572 he moved to Spain.

He went first to Madrid, where he produced among other works 'The Adoration of the Name of Jesus', an allegory of the battle of Lepanto, commissioned by Philip II. The name of Jesus, IHS for Jesus Hominum Salvator, is blazoned in the sky. Kneeling in adoration on the left are Philip II dressed in black, the Pope and the Doge of Venice, the trio representing the victorious Holy League. On the right the damned – the infidel Turks – are in torment at the mouth of Hell.²

However, El Greco soon lost favour with the King, and by 1577 he was in Toledo, where he spent the last decades of his life. Some of his works were realist, such as the portrait of which the sitter said that his soul was at a loss to choose between his real body and his painted semblance. But it was in Toledo that El Greco developed the unique personal style of brilliant colours combined with the 'purposeful distortion and pulling of planes'.³ El Greco died in Toledo in 1614, in relative poverty after many disputes over payment for his work. He was virtually forgotten until well into the nineteenth century, when he came to be recognised as a forerunner of the Impressionists and their successors: 'Cézanne and El Greco are spiritual brothers,' wrote the artist Franz Marc.⁴ Picasso borrowed from El Greco for his 'Les Demoiselles d'Avignon'. Perhaps the best summary of El Greco's work was by an early appreciator of it, the critic Théophile Gautier, who wrote in 1845: 'There are abuses of light and dark, of violent contrasts, of singular colours, extravagant attitudes, draperies are shattered and crumpled haphazardly; but in all that there presides a depraved energy, an unhealthy strength that betrays the great painter and the madness of Genius.'⁵

Until the late flowering of the Veneto-Cretan renaissance, education in Venetian Crete had been patchy at best. In the early period of Venetian rule in the fourteenth century some schools existed, and popular verses from this time express the moans of schoolboys throughout the ages. One wanted vocational not academic training:

I didn't learn a cobbler's trade, a shipwright's or a quilter's,
At school I learnt – oh my poor head! – just Greek and Latin letters.

Another thought school was simply a waste of time:

At length my school became for me a wild and awful monster.
Of letters I learnt only few, but quickly I forgot them,
And evermore departed through the same door that I'd entered.⁶

These schools may have been basic, but initially Crete was enriched by educated refugees from Constantinople, fleeing the city before 1453 as the Turkish threat grew. Many worked as copyists of classical Greek texts by Thucydides, Apollonius Rhodius and others. Enoch Powell, professor of Greek as well as controversial politician, maintained that fifteenth-century Cretan scholarship made a unique contribution to the study of classical Greek texts. But the general level of education was low, even among the clergy: 'An uneducated priest is simply an impostor,' thundered a Cretan abbot.⁷

From then on the Catholic Church was the main instigator of education in Crete, but frequently bedevilled it. Cardinal Vissarion, a Greek converted to the Catholic Church, founded a Greek school in Iráklion in the mid-fifteenth century, but it was distrusted by the Cretans because it propagated Vissarion's support for the unification of the Catholic and Orthodox Churches. Seminaries to train Cretans as Catholic priests were established in Iráklion in 1592 and later in Chaniá and Réthimnon. The Jesuits established a school in Iráklion in 1585, but their extreme views scandalised the Cretan Orthodox, and twenty years later the Venetian authorities expelled them. A worse fate befell the Calvinists, champions of the Reformation, who started a school at Iráklion in the same period. The Catholic archbishop of Crete called for the public burning of their books, and the three teachers of the school were arrested and sentenced to imprisonment in Venice, the principal for life.

As schooling was uncertain, there was a demand for private tutors, and troops of the Venetian garrison were often employed to teach Cretan children. But such tutors were sometimes hard to find: a writer in 1579 said that teachers were rare, and then corrected himself: 'But why do I say rare – there isn't a single one.'⁸ Only in the last century of Venetian rule was higher education properly established, with the founding of academies at Réthimnon in 1562, Iráklion in 1590 and Chaniá in 1637. This not only contributed to the Veneto-Cretan renaissance but produced a steady flow of Cretan students to universities in Italy, principally Padua. There, in the decades before the fall of Crete in 1669, 234 Cretan students are recorded as attending the medical school and 290 the law school, and other Greeks studied the same subjects. No wonder that the university of Padua was regarded as the alma mater, not only of Cretans but of Greeks throughout the regions of Venetian or Turkish rule.

It is clear, however, that this shared world was not without friction, and one cause of it was Venetian recruitment of oarsmen for the galleys. Until the time of Lepanto enough free oarsmen could be recruited, for a limited period and for pay, but as the number of Venetian galleys grew and as service on them became increasingly unpopular there were not enough free oarsmen. Venice tried to solve the problem in various ways: by recruiting oarsmen abroad, in Dalmatia as early as the thirteenth century, and in Venice itself by using convicts. In Crete they drew on the pool of Cretan peasants who were

registered for a period of compulsory labour for the state as a form of taxation. The pool was large, some 40,000 in 1629, but it was difficult to recruit even the 400 men needed for two peacetime galleys. Recruitment was brutal, as a report by the provveditor-general in 1594 makes clear: 'The provveditor gave the order for all those who were to be enlisted to come forward and present themselves. So the men of the village aged between fifteen and fifty came along, and all those who seemed to be the most suitable for service were enlisted in the usual way. Then they were rounded up in the barns or churches and when fifty or sometimes a hundred had been gathered they were chained up to each other in pairs so that they couldn't get away, and in the custody of the local noble and some horses they were promptly escorted to the galleys.'⁹ Some villagers fled to offshore islands to escape galley service, some ruined themselves paying substitutes to replace them, and a recruit from Anópolis on the south coast hanged himself rather than serve.

Another cause of friction between Venetians and Cretans was the question of what crops the island should grow. As on other islands, there was a conflict between grain for self-sufficiency and other crops – in this case vines and olives – for profitable export. In the fifteenth century Crete produced plenty of grain, especially on the fertile plain of Mesará in the centre of the south coast. There was enough to feed Crete and to export large quantities to Venice. But the same century saw a massive increase in vine growing at the expense of grain, and Crete soon came to depend on imports of grain for three or four months of the year. These imports at first came from Ottoman territory until they were banned in 1555, and piracy made grain shipments from any source hazardous. In the following decades vine growing became increasingly profitable. The extra troops stationed on Crete after the fall of Cyprus drove up wine prices, and pirates, especially English ones, came to Crete and bought up all the wine they could, paying fancy prices because they were so rich.

The Venetian authorities tried a forcible solution to the problem. In 1575 they ordered vines to be ripped up to encourage grain cultivation instead, and there were more such orders in 1584 and 1602, which suggests that the policy was not working. Even when it did force a change of crops this was not necessarily to grain but often to olives, and in 1589 the provveditor-general reported that: 'The planting of olive trees increased after the [recently issued] prohibitions on viticulture, and is increasing still. I am afraid that if things continue as they are measures will have to be taken to discourage such cultivation, because otherwise olive tree cultivation will intrude on the growing of wheat, just as has happened with viticulture.'¹⁰

The destruction of vines provoked an outcry that was a warning for the Venetians; the landowners declared that they would make 'no distinction between being subjects of Venice or of the Turks',¹¹ that is that Venice's harsh measures risked losing Cretan support against any Turkish invasion. But there were still advocates of Venetian rule by force. In 1616 the priest Paolo Sarpi, adviser to the Venetian state, addressed the Senate on how Venice

could keep perpetual dominion over Crete. His ferocious polemic read, in part:

For your Greek subjects of the island of Candia, the Greek faith is never to be trusted; and perhaps they would not much stick at submitting to the Turk, having the example of all the rest of their nation before their eyes. These therefore must be watch'd with more attention lest, like wild beasts, as they are, they should find an occasion to use their teeth and claws. The surest way is to keep good garrisons to awe them. Wine and bastinadoes ought to be their share, and keep good nature for a better occasion.

As for the gentlemen of those Colonies,' Sarpi went on:

you must be very watchful of them; for besides the natural ferocity of the climate, they have the character of noblemen, which raises their spirits. If the gentlemen of these Colonies do tyrannize over the villages of their dominion, the best way is not to seem to see it, that there may be no kindness between them and their subject. It will not be amiss likewise to dispute all their pretensions to any particular jurisdiction; and if at any time their nobility or title be disputed, it will do well to sell them the confirmation of it at as dear a rate as possible; and, in a word, remember that all the good that can come from them, is already obtain'd, which was to fix the Venetian dominion; and for the future there is nothing but mischief to be expected from them.¹²

Venetians on the spot saw things differently, and were well aware of the need for Cretan support against a Turkish attack, which was becoming ever more probable. In 1639 the provveditor-general wrote that the Cretan people 'must always be treated well so that they will remain faithful and devoted. Because when they are oppressed and used too much in forced labour by the fief holders and sometimes even by the representatives of the state, and subjected to extraordinary harshness, they are driven to despair. Then they abandon the kingdom and go to the Turkish territories. They incite the enemy and open the way toward attacks, which perhaps the enemy would not otherwise have thought of.'¹³ But it was very late in the day for the Venetians to adopt a conciliatory policy towards their Cretan subjects, and too late to win their general support against the imminent Turkish invasion.

1669 – The Turks Take Crete

There was an interval of 75 years between the Ottoman annexation of Venetian Cyprus in 1570 and their attack on Venetian Crete in 1645. Also it took them only one year to take Cyprus, but 24 years to take Crete. This contrast prompts two questions. Why did the Ottomans wait for 75 years before consolidating their control over the whole of the eastern Mediterranean? And why was the annexation of Crete so prolonged while the annexation of Cyprus – an island of almost exactly the same size – was so quick?

One reason for the long wait between the attacks on Cyprus and on Crete was that Ottoman forces were occupied meanwhile with other wars – against the Habsburgs in Europe, and on their eastern frontier against the Persian Safavid Empire in Iran and Iraq. But the Persian war ended in 1639, and in 1644 the Turks made peace with the Habsburgs. Another and perhaps more telling reason for the long interval was turmoil at the centre. The Sultans who succeeded Selim II (1566–74), conqueror of Cyprus and himself reported to be an alcoholic, were perhaps the least competent series of rulers who have ever been at the head of a major state. These Sultans were dominated by court factions of grand viziers, eunuchs and women of the Sultan's family, even those Sultans who came to the throne as adults – and three acceded as children. Some historians maintain that competition between factions made the adoption of any forceful and consistent policy virtually impossible.

In 1644 under Ibrahim I, perhaps the most unstable Sultan of the series, there were two opposing factions, one for war to drive Venice from Crete and one for peace. An incident at sea provided a *casus belli*. In the autumn of that year a raiding vessel from Malta, the base of the Knights of St John, seized three Turkish ships on their way from Constantinople to Egypt. These were prestigious prizes as they carried two eminent Turks from the Sultan's court, with their retinues and a considerable amount of treasure. Of the passengers 350 men and 30 women were seized as slaves or for ransom, and the rest were killed. The corsairs took their prizes into Venetian territory at the small secluded port of Kalí Liménes halfway along the south coast of Crete. The Venetians had lookouts on this long and rocky south coast, but it was impossible for them to watch, let alone guard, the whole of it. Nevertheless Venice was blamed for sheltering pirates, and the Turkish war party had its

justification for invasion. It was thought in some quarters that the task would be easy. The English consul in Smyrna, Paul Rycaut, wrote that the whole possession of Crete ‘was imagined, at the beginning of the war, would upon a bare demand be quietly presented’.¹

In June 1645 an Ottoman fleet landed troops near Chaniá, the area chosen nearly three centuries later by invading German paratroops. Within weeks the Ottoman forces had taken Chaniá, within a year Réthimnon, and within two years were masters of the whole island except Iráklion – then called, as was Crete, by the Italianate name of Candia.

Iráklion lies on the sea, and was then ringed on both its landward and seaward sides by a formidable defensive wall. The siege, lasting from 1645 until 1669, was the longest siege ever recorded, though the early years were more a period of attrition and it was only in the last two years that the fighting became active. The battle for Iráklion was so protracted for a number of reasons. First, the harbour remained open for the Venetian defenders, since the Ottoman fleet was now much weaker than at Lepanto in the previous century. Then their fleet numbered 230 vessels, but despite the rebuilding effort after Lepanto only 78 ships put to sea against Crete. So the Ottomans were not strong enough to blockade Iráklion effectively from the sea. But the naval power of Venice, now without naval support from any of the European powers, had also declined, and Venice, despite a blockade of the Dardanelles, was unable to prevent Ottoman ships supplying their troops through Cretan ports other than Iráklion. Foreign vessels profitably supplied both sides. Venice’s appeals for troops from other powers – Spain, the Habsburgs and France – brought only a limited response.

There was also stalemate at Iráklion on land. This was a period when, broadly speaking, defensive walls had become stronger than the guns used to attack them. The new technique in fortification was the bastion, projecting in a half-diamond shape from the line of the walls. This allowed defenders to fire in a 180-degree arc, and the diamond shape presented only a glancing surface to enemy fire from the front. The Venetians had built the major part of Iráklion’s walls in the 1520s and 1530s, and by the time of the siege the walls had been strengthened by seven of these crucial bastions.

But perhaps the main reason for the long impasse was that both sides received support from Cretans. Some, labelled renegades, supported the Turks, and the name of one of them, Andhréas Barótsis, is still reviled. The Turks offered rewards to Cretans who came over to their side, and it is claimed that they spent 700,000 ducats on these incentives. Other Cretans were won over by the Turkish promise, made in the first years of the war, to appoint an Orthodox archbishop of the island. But there was also Cretan support for the Venetians, the result of the centuries of increasingly close relationships between the two and of the softening of Venetian rule since their loss of Cyprus.

Thus for some twenty years Turkish and Venetian forces faced each other

at Iráklion, neither side strong enough to win a decisive victory, but in 1666 the stakes were raised. Five years earlier a new energetic reforming grand vizier had been appointed, Ahmed Koprulu, one of the Koprulu family who would dominate Ottoman politics for the rest of the century. He came to Crete in November 1666 to take personal control of the siege of Iráklion, followed next spring by 40,000 new Turkish troops. In response Venice appointed a new commander, Francesco Morosini. Turkish bombardment now began in earnest, and by the summer of 1669 the town of Iráklion was a shattered war zone: 'The state of the town was terrible to behold,' wrote a contemporary, 'the streets were covered with bullets and cannonballs, and shrapnel from mines and grenades. There was not a church, not a building even, whose walls were not holed and almost reduced to rubble by the enemy cannon. The houses were no longer anything more than miserable hovels. Everywhere the stench was nauseating: at every turn one came upon the dead, the wounded or the maimed.'²

The twists and turns of the final negotiations for the surrender of Iráklion are described in detail by, surprisingly, an Englishman known as Harry Chionídhis, perhaps originally Johnson, or maybe Snow. Chionídhis left two handwritten accounts of the proceedings, which vary only slightly. Both found their way into private libraries in England, but by the end of the eighteenth century one had gone to Oxford University and the other to Cambridge. Chionídhis was involved throughout the surrender discussions, perhaps as a member of the Venetian negotiating team, and was present at the final grand ceremony for the signing of the peace agreement. We know a great deal about the experience of fighting the Turks, but Chionídhis gives us a rare insight into what it was like to negotiate with them.

The Venetians could hardly have been in a weaker negotiating position, with their defensive walls shattered by Turkish mines, the city in ruins, their numbers reduced and, with winter approaching, little chance of immediate reinforcement. A final straw was the departure of most of the 2,000 French troops led by the Duc de Noailles, who insisted that he had orders from Louis XIV to leave Crete by 20 August 1669. But though the Turks were in a stronger position they too had an incentive to end the costly siege, not least because, of their 34 senior commanders listed by Chionídhis as serving since the siege began in earnest two years earlier, eleven had been killed in battle during that time. The Venetians were also at an apparent disadvantage because their negotiator was the relatively junior Colonel Thomas Annand, a Scottish mercenary perhaps with links to his fellow Briton Chionídhis, accompanied only by a secretary. Annand at each stage reported back to his principal, Francesco Morosini. The Turkish principal was the grand vizier Ahmed Koprulu, and the negotiations were conducted by a number of Turkish officers, of increasing seniority as the discussions proceeded, who reported to him. The interpreter between the Venetians and the Turks was Nikoúsios Panayiótis, who later held the office of grand interpreter at the Turkish court,

the first Greek to do so.

The negotiations began on the morning of 28 August 1669, when Annand sailed in a felucca to a beach some four miles west of Iráklion and near one of the Turkish camps. There he fired a shot to attract attention and put out a white flag. After an hour and a half delay, no doubt a tactical one on the part of the Turks, Annand and his party were invited ashore by Ahmed Aman, an aga of the grand vizier's retinue.

From the start Colonel Annand astutely and boldly took the line that he was not there to discuss the surrender of Iráklion by the defeated to the victors, since the city could well hold out a great deal longer. He was there to arrange a bargain between two equal powers. Moreover these powers were not enemies, but friends of long standing, and Venice wished again to 'establish the correspondency of affection which the Serene Republic hath laboured to confirm with the Ottoman Porte'.³ Therefore if – and it was still if – Iráklion was surrendered, Venice expected Turkish concessions in exchange.

The Turks would have none of this. Ahmed Aman, having consulted the grand vizier, told Annand through the interpreter Panayiótis that no further discussions could take place unless the surrender of Iráklion was first agreed. Annand again vigorously set out his position, but undertook to consult Morosini and return next day. But though Annand seemed to have got nowhere he had won one minor concession: Annand was to return next day to the landing stage at the Palaiókastro, more suitable than the windswept beach by the Turkish camp, though still a boat journey away. This also meant that Annand would be spared harassment by the Turkish soldiers of the camp who on this first day 'flocked together in great numbers to dive into the occasion of the meeting, protesting to all [the Venetians] to depart immediately, and not to return anymore without a positive affirmative answer that the place should be yielded up'.⁴

Annand reported that evening to Morosini, who, after consulting his colleagues, told Annand to stand firm: no surrender without compensation. Annand spent the next day on board ship, unable to set out because of contrary winds, but on the third day of the negotiations met Ahmed Aman and his interpreter at Palaiókastro. Again there was no progress, except an agreement to meet again on the following day, this time at the fort of Áyios Dhimítrios close to the city.

When Annand arrived there on the fourth day, 1 September 1669, he found that two things had changed. Ahmed Aman had been replaced as Turkish negotiator by a team. This was led by Ibrahim Pasha, a close associate of the grand vizier with full authority to reach agreements. Ibrahim was supported by a senior janissary officer Chiagaia Bey, so the pairing combined a diplomat and a soldier, who played the traditional roles of soft man and hard man. The other change must have surprised Annand: Ibrahim at once asked Annand to state his conditions for giving up Iráklion. It was after all to be a deal, not a surrender. Annand had won his first major point.

But Annand continued to negotiate forcefully, and was prepared to push the talks to the point of collapse if necessary. He made two demands for Venice to keep territory: in Crete the fortified islands of Souída, Graboúsa and Spinalónga, and in Dalmatia Clissa, modern Klis, and other towns recently taken by Venice from the Turks. Against opposition from Chiagaia he won both concessions. He then went further by requiring, in exchange for Iráklion, some territory at present in Turkish hands, but this was a step too far. Even the more amenable Ibrahim declared that the point was ‘as insuperable as it is impossible to reach the heavens with a hand’.⁵ Morosini agreed to drop the claim, but raised instead the question of Venetian cannons. Those belonging to Iráklion would be surrendered, but those transferred to Iráklion from Venetian ships – cannons that Morosini listed – should be taken away. Again, the point was won.

The articles of the agreement were finally signed on 6 September in a magnificent pavilion specially set up for the occasion, with fine carpets, wall hangings of cloth of gold, and scarlet cushions fringed with gold and silk. The grand vizier with his retinue arrived on horseback, accompanied by 500 janissaries, and took his place on a sumptuous spread of cushions. Morosini, however, did not appear, perhaps feeling that it would be humiliating to do so, and the Venetians were represented by the faithful Annand.

Annand and the grand vizier exchanged expressions of good will. Annand said on behalf of Morosini that he was glad this tedious war ‘between two potentates’ (the equality on which he had insisted throughout) was ended, and that they ‘had no other design but that the hatred between them may be laid aside and annihilated’. The grand vizier made an equally amicable response, but added – for he too had a point to make, that the Turks were the stronger party – that Morosini had reason to come to terms ‘for he knows very well how great advantages will rebound to the most Serene Republic by the affection and favour of the Grand Signor.’⁶ Then the articles were produced, signed and sealed. Even then there was a final hitch. On reading the articles Annand found that, though the three Cretan fortresses had been conceded to Venice, their ‘territories’, that is the areas within cannon shot of them, had not, although this had been agreed. Annand insisted on their inclusion, saying that without it ‘all that was done must be undone.’ Again, and for the last time, Annand won his point.

On the following day, 7 September, the Venetian embarkation began. There was no trouble between the opposing troops. According to an account written not long afterwards, ‘a great silence fell on the enemy camps and there was no disorder in the town. In the twelve days allowed for departure the soldiers greeted each other below the bastions and ramparts, and talked of the accidents and adventures of the war as if they had never had any quarrel.’⁷ The embarkation also passed off peacefully. Only two Greek priests, three Jews and a handful of soldiers who converted to Islam remained in the city, and the rest of the population, some 4,000, took their places on the ships in the

harbour 'con gran quiete e silenzio'. Iráklion was now the skeleton of a city.⁸

At the fall of Famagusta in Cyprus 100 years earlier the honeyed words of the Turkish commander had been followed by his vicious and humiliating execution of the Venetian general Bragadino. No such reversal happened at Iráklion, and the articles of the treaty were faithfully observed. In part this was probably because the agreement had been made by the grand vizier himself, not just by a commander in the field. But it can also be ascribed to the wish of the Turks to present themselves now as civilised partners in the European space, not as barbaric intruders into it.

The Greeks under Ottoman rule elsewhere were not directly affected by Venice's loss of Crete, but were involved in Venice's attempt fifteen years later to recover her position in the eastern Mediterranean. This brought war to the mainland of Greece for the first time since the original Ottoman conquests following the fall of Constantinople. Venice joined the alliance of powers, another so-called Holy League, which had driven the Ottoman army back from their last siege of Vienna in 1683, and now aimed to push them out of Europe altogether. This League combined the forces of Austria, Poland, the papacy, the Knights of St John from Malta, and Venice. In 1684 Venetian troops, once again under Francesco Morosini, landed in the Gulf of Árta to begin the hoped-for annexation of Greece.

The Venetians, with fluctuating support from the other members of the Holy League and even more intermittent help from the Greeks of the Mani, had immediate and dramatic successes in seizing Ottoman strongholds. In 1685 they took Koróni and Kalamáta and in 1686 Methóni and the two fortresses at Navarino, giving Venice mastery of virtually the whole southern Peloponnese. Then they moved north, taking Navplion later in 1686 and in 1687 Pátras, Akrocorinth and the two castles on either side of the narrows at the western end of the Gulf of Corinth. In late 1687 the Venetians laid siege to Athens, where on 26 September a mortar shot from the besiegers detonated the Ottoman powder magazine in the Parthenon, the opening event in the story of the ruining and despoliation of the Parthenon that arouses passionate controversy to this day. Ironically, the capture of Athens and the unfortunate mortar shot served no purpose, as within a few months the Venetians had abandoned Athens as strategically worthless.

The Venetian advance stalled only at Chalkís on Évia, where the island is closest to the mainland. In the late summer of 1688 the Venetians attacked Chalkís but for the first time met a determined Ottoman defence. Venice lost a third of its 1,500-strong army to malaria, and the supporting Holy League contingents departed. The final assault on Chalkís in October led to the loss of another 1,000 Venetian troops in a few hours and their abandonment of the siege.

How did Venice with her allies achieve their lightning if short-lived campaign on the Greek mainland? In part it was because the Holy League was well led, by Francesco Morosini and other generals from Venice, and by the

Swedish commander Count Otto von Königsmark – expensively hired as a mercenary. By contrast the Ottoman forces were ineffective because of rapid changes in command. But the primary reason for Venetian successes was that the Ottomans, as so often in their history, were now fighting on two fronts, both this time in the west. As well as the attack on the Peloponnese the Ottoman forces had to face the rapid advance southwards of the Austrian troops of the Holy League. These forces took Belgrade in September 1688 and advanced on a broad front as far south as Skopje. At all costs the Ottomans had to prevent the joining of the two arms of the offensive, Austrian from the north and Venetian from the south. It was vital that they held the buffer zone of Greece north of the Gulf of Corinth – hence their determined defence of Chalkís on Évia. If the two arms had succeeded in meeting, Greece and the rest of the Balkans might have been released en bloc from Ottoman rule by the end of the seventeenth century, instead of piecemeal in the course of the nineteenth.

In fact the Austrian offensive rapidly petered out, and by the end of 1690 Belgrade and the territory to the south as far as the Gulf of Corinth were once again in Ottoman hands. But there was still a dangerous front line between the Turks and the Venetians remaining in the Peloponnese. The French botanist Joseph Pitton de Tournefort travelled extensively in Greece and Turkey between 1700 and 1702 but would not risk going to Athens. ‘It is very dangerous to go to Athens at present,’ he wrote, ‘because the frontier between Turks and Venetians has still not been settled. The countryside is full of undisciplined troops who hunt down travellers and rob them, and often send them to the next world.’⁹ The expulsion of the Venetians came later. In 1715 a massive Ottoman army of 100,000 drove the 8,000 Venetian troops from the Peloponnese. In the treaty that followed Venice retained only the Ionian islands and four towns on the opposite mainland. Venice’s days as a major player on the stage of Greece were over.

Turkish Rule in Cyprus and Crete

The Turkish captures of Cyprus and of Crete were separated by a century, but the regimes they established in their two new possessions are best considered together. Similarities are obvious, but there were some important differences.

The Turkish rule in Cyprus established after the final conquest of the island in 1571 was seen by some contemporaries as a change for the worse and by some as a change for the better. A Venetian returning home after the Turkish conquest stopped near Limassol and was told by the Cypriots that they already regretted the ending of Venetian rule. The island was now almost a desert, they said, and the upper classes were reduced by poverty to work as muleteers or pedlars. A few years later a French traveller reported that the Cypriots had become wretched slaves, that many families were secretly leaving, and that the Turks had even threatened to introduce the *devshirme* on Cyprus. But at the same time a Cypriot writing to Martin Crusius said that the treatment of his compatriots was much milder than before. Which view was right?¹

The declared policy of the Turks was certainly one of leniency. The Turkish army commander Lala Mustafa, who later brutally executed the Venetian commander of Famagusta, by contrast ordered in the early days of the invasion that no harm should be done to the Cypriots, and an officer who disobeyed was severely punished. The policy was confirmed and elaborated in the Sultan's firman of 6 May 1572: 'The island of Cyprus has been captured by force; therefore the situation of the common people has somewhat deteriorated. So no violence should be done to them; they should be treated with justice. It is important both in the enforcement of the decisions of the sharia [religious law] and in the levying of state taxes, to regard and protect them, so that the country may thus revert to its former prosperous state. Thus I order that you must be careful in giving the common people, who are a trust from God to us, as much protection and mercy as you can.'²

There were good reasons for this conciliatory approach. Two are referred to in the 1572 firman: that it accorded with Turkish principles enshrined in the sharia, and that it was necessary to make the island prosperous and so a source of tax revenue. It was particularly important to win the cooperation of the Cypriot workers on the land because so many productive areas had been left uncultivated when peasants fled to the mountains to escape the disruptions of

war. In 1572, 76 villages in productive areas had no farmers and there was a famine that year. A further reason for conciliation was that the Holy League, after its victory at Lepanto, might now attempt to recapture Cyprus.

The administration of the newly conquered island was led by the standard group of Turkish officials, who had been appointed by the army commander Lala Mustafa after the fall of Nicosia in September 1571 and so well before the conquest was complete. Head of the new Cyprus government was a beylerbey, and subordinate to him a bey as chief executive, a defterdar or treasurer, a kadi or judge as guardian of religious and constitutional principles, and various military commanders. The choice of dragoman or interpreter, who was often a useful intermediary between the Cypriots and the Turkish government, was left to the bishops and leading citizens. When the Catholic clergy departed with the Venetians the supremacy of the Orthodox Church and its bishops was of course now unchallenged.

One of the first acts of the Turkish government was to conduct a census of the population, in effect a basis for taxation, which was completed by the end of 1572. The census takers travelled round the country collecting information about individuals – who was head of the family, how much land did he own – and about production – what crops had been grown in the past three years and at what profit, what were the dues expected from customs, fisheries, salt pans and so on.

As a result of the survey, taxes overall were reduced from those in Venetian times. Personal taxes, on individuals and on households, remained at much the same level but tithes, the proportion of produce to be surrendered, were eased. Previously peasants tied to the land had forfeited one third of their produce to the landowner, and free peasants one fifth or less. Now all paid one fifth, and since there were twice as many tied peasants as free this was a widespread benefit. Taxes on animals were also reduced: the sheep tax was halved, and the taxes on newborn animals were abolished. So too was the salt tax.

There were two other benefits to the Cypriots from the change of regime. One was that peasants could buy effective ownership of their land, including the right to bequeath it, even though technically all land still belonged to the Sultan. The price paid was generally the equivalent of a year's rent. This sometimes led to abuses: speculators bought the land for the set sum, and later tried to sell it back to the peasant at an inflated price. But within a year of the survey's completion this practice was stamped on, and the authorities told to ensure that a peasant recovering his land paid only the original price. The second benefit was the reduction and then disappearance of forced labour, which had previously been two or more days a week. In a firman of October 1572 the Sultan decreed that peasants should do only one day a week and for the state, not for the landholder, but even this one day seems never to have been enforced.

So it seems clear that, initially at least, the introduction of Turkish rule was a benefit to Cyprus, and the Cypriot optimists at the time of the change were

in the right. But over time good regulations were subverted by bad administration. When, after three centuries of Turkish rule, Britain by international agreement took over the government of Cyprus in 1878, a British officer wrote: 'It seems that in Cyprus it is not so much the laws themselves, but rather the administration of the laws which needs reform. The Ottoman Government is noted for publishing innumerable firmans, laws, and ordinances, which leave but little room for improvement as regards either completeness or natural equity; and it has been either the disregard or maladministration of those laws which has done so much injury in the country.'³

However, one aspect of the new Turkish rule had far-reaching and unhappy consequences: the policy of establishing an Ottoman element in Cyprus. This policy seems to have stemmed from the Turkish government's aim to create a mixed population on the island as less likely to be troublesome than a predominantly Greek one. It was almost certainly not, as has sometimes been maintained, to remedy a drastic decline in the Cyprus population. George Hill, in his comprehensive history of Cyprus, examines all the evidence on population figures and concludes that 'the reports of the earlier depletion of the island were really exaggerated.'⁴

Some of the settlers were troops who stayed on after the conquest and were granted land on condition that they settled on it and did not become absentee landlords. Many others were Ottoman subjects brought in from other parts of the empire – from Anatolia and even from Damascus and Aleppo. These immigrants were offered inducements, in the form of two or three years' exemption from taxes and dues, but were to be moved from their homes to Cyprus by force if necessary. Some were useful members of the community – artisans and, when saltpetre was discovered on Cyprus, workers skilled in its refinement as gunpowder. Others were less desirable – peasants who were unemployed or had a bad reputation, and Anatolian brigands. Within a few years of the conquest the Turkish population had risen to some 20,000.

By the mid-twentieth century the Greeks and Turks in Cyprus had become polarised. As Cyprus was not part of the Greek state in 1923, or indeed subsequently, the Muslim Turkish element did not leave in the exchange of populations after the Asia Minor catastrophe of that year. The demand for union with Greece, *énosis*, which began when the British took over the island in 1878, naturally enough was supported by the Cypriot Greeks and opposed by the Cypriot Turks. By the 1950s the *énosis* question bedevilled relations not only between Greek and Turkish Cypriots but between Greece and Turkey and between Greece and Britain. Cypriot independence in 1960 failed to bring the Greek and Turkish elements together. In 1974, in response to a Greek army coup that ousted the legitimate government of Archbishop Makários, Turkey invaded Cyprus on the grounds that the coup threatened the Turkish Cypriot population. Cyprus remains divided to this day, a division that has its roots in the events of the 1570s. The arm of history is indeed long.

On the surface it might seem that little had changed in the Turkish method of conquest between their capture of Cyprus and their occupation of Crete a century later.

In Crete the Turks had the same interest in winning the cooperation of the Cretans, though the military threat was no longer from a Holy League triumphant after Lepanto but from the continued presence of Venice. Venice still held the three fortified islands of Graboúsa, Spinalónga and, most importantly, Soúdha. On Soúdha island there was a Venetian governor with the title of provveditor-extraordinary, who maintained a network of spies gathering information about Turkish troop movements. On one occasion a Venetian spy even tried to persuade the Turkish commander of the Iráklion janissaries, with whom he was friendly, to switch allegiance to Venice, an approach that the commander refused only with some reluctance. In 1692 the Venetians briefly besieged Chaniá using Soúdha island as a base. Venice's imperial ambitions in Crete were not yet dead.

The hierarchy of Turkish officials governing Crete was again very similar to that in Cyprus, with head of government, treasurer, kadi as guardian of the law, and military commanders. Officials in Crete were of higher rank than on Cyprus – pasha rather than bey – since Crete was a province or eyalet of the Ottoman Empire in its own right, whereas Cyprus was part of the province of the Mediterranean islands along with Rhodes, Náxos and others.

As in Cyprus, one of the first acts of the new Turkish administration in Crete was to conduct a census, but one with a significantly different purpose. Earlier censuses, including the Cypriot one, had been concerned with individuals. Their status – as Muslim or Christian, free peasant or one tied to a timar-holder – would determine what agricultural tax they paid (though the personal poll tax was still lower for Muslims than for Christians). The Cretan census, however, was concerned only with land, and its owner's tax liability depended on what the land was used for – vineyards, gardens, vegetable plots and so on. As a result of the census tithe rates were made uniform and generally reduced, probably as in Cyprus to one fifth.

The switch to taxation of land irrespective of its owner was the first step in the dismantling of the traditional timar system. Under this system the holder of the timar portion of land benefited from a proportion of its produce and from the labour of the peasants tied to the estate, and in return had to provide in wartime a body of troops under his command. As we have seen, the Venetians had found that this was no longer effective, and simply led to ludicrous charades of military preparedness. Land was now granted without restriction to its holders, whether military or civilian, Muslim or Christian. A ruling of the Islamic court in Iráklion in the early years of Turkish rule makes this clear: 'The land is clearly and unequivocally the freehold of its owners and as such they are able to buy it, sell it, and treat it as they wish. Upon their death it can be divided among their heirs, in accordance with the sharia, just as all their other property.'⁵

Some land in Crete, particularly in the eastern districts, was granted to Turkish soldiers, and such land was called timar, but unlike the original timars these grants were usually minute. They were far too small to provide a permanent income, and were more like a demob grant. Officially there were 482 of these so-called timars, but each of these was subdivided into a dozen or more parts, and the number of holders was nearly 2,000. A soldier might hold a small share of the revenue from several different plots.

But this system did not last long, and was soon replaced by a more efficient way of channelling funds to the central treasury in Istanbul. The first step was to overturn private ownership of land and progressively reclaim it for the state. Thus in the large district of Pedhiádhá east of Iráklion only one village was state owned in the first census, but by the time of the census conducted 37 years later, 90 of the district's 105 villages were state property.

The second step was to reintroduce the Venetian institution of tax farmers, who paid a lump sum to the treasury for the rights to a district's taxes and kept all the taxes they were able to collect. The tax farm of a single village might cost 15,000 to 20,000 akches, but some were much more expensive. The tax farm for all of Crete's monasteries cost 480,000 akches, and the one for the customs of Iráklion's port nearly 600,000 akches. These two combined were worth about 1 per cent of the value of Thessalonika's total external trade at the time, so were substantial sums for individuals to invest.

Many of these tax-farming contracts were bought by members of the wealthy elite in Constantinople, the most powerful of which was the politically dominant Koprulu family. As one historian has put it, thanks to the growing influence of this elite 'imperial power was diluted by an increasingly dense network of interest groups at the centre.'⁶ But many tax farms were sold to janissaries in Crete. Janissaries included both imperial soldiers, that is Turks sent periodically from Constantinople, and local troops.

One picture of the janissaries is, in Edmund Burke's phrase, one of a rapacious and licentious soldiery. 'The savagery of the janissaries of Crete was notorious,' writes one Cretan historian of the island, and gives as evidence a Sultan's decree of 1762 condemning the outrages of 'the brigands and malefactors in the employment of the guard of this fortress' – though it is not entirely clear who these miscreants were.⁷ Much later, in 1793, a bishop was murdered by janissaries. But a more detailed look at the evidence produces a different picture: of the Cretan janissaries as deeply involved in the civilian economic life of the island, who were janissaries only in that they drew janissary pay.

Thus around 1700 nearly half the bakers in Iráklion were janissaries below officer rank. There are other examples of a janissary as owner of a shop, head of the Iráklion market, involved illegally in the wine trade, and dealing in property. Membership of the janissaries was often purely nominal. Even in the early years of Turkish rule the janissaries, according to the Venetian governor on Soudhá island, included over 1,000 children aged between ten and twelve.

In the 1730s a visitor to Crete wrote: 'There are a great number of janissaries who belong to [companies] which are in other parts of the empire, and are settled here as merchants or tradesmen, and yet receive their pay as janissaries.'⁸ It was even possible to qualify for janissary pay by simply buying a janissary pay slip on the black market.

However, the main avenue for entry to the janissaries was through conversion to Islam, which was greater in Crete than in Cyprus or anywhere else in the Greek world. Some of these conversions had nothing to do with a military career but were for specific personal reasons. One Cretan is recorded as converting to avoid punishment for associating with the Venetians on Spinalónga; a Christian woman might convert on marriage to a Muslim, or to win guardianship of the child of a mixed marriage. Avoidance of the higher Christian poll tax may have been a reason for some conversions, but this would not explain the much more numerous conversions in Crete than elsewhere.

Perhaps the main reason for conversion to Islam was that the Turkish conquest of Crete took 24 years to complete, far longer than any other acquisition. However, from the end of the second year the Turks held the whole island except Iráklion, and their eventual victory could be foreseen. There was therefore a strong incentive, especially when backed by a money payment, to join the winning side and to demonstrate loyalty to the victors by converting to their faith. Conversion would also ease the path into the military. The Turks regarded local recruits to the militia far more favourably than the Venetians, who accepted them as recruits only when forced to by lack of manpower, believing, as one provveditor put it, that 'the militias start to deteriorate as Greeks and villagers enter them.'⁹

The formal process of conversion is not clear. There was still an official circumciser who halfway through the war was ordered to circumcise all converts. But if conversion was on a large scale the corresponding mass circumcision seems improbable. It is more likely that a declaration before the kadi was enough, especially if a Muslim, perhaps the convert's employer, acted as sponsor.

In the summer of 1700 the French botanist Joseph Pitton de Tournefort spent three months on Crete. Turkish rule of the island had by then been established for 30 years, but memories of the Venetians and their long struggle to defend the island were still vivid. Tournefort, born in 1656, was already a distinguished botanist, at the age of 27 being appointed professor of botany at the royal Jardin des Plantes in Paris, a position he held for the rest of his life.

The plan for Tournefort's travels, approved and paid for by Louis XIV, was that he should go to Greece, Constantinople, Arabia, Egypt and the Barbary coast. His main task was 'to investigate plants, metals and minerals, to learn about the diseases of these countries and their remedies, and about everything concerning medicine and natural history'.¹⁰ But there was a further object:

Tournefort was to report on the trade, religion and customs of the inhabitants of these countries. This reflected France's renewed interest in Ottoman lands since the 1699 Treaty of Karlowitz, which ended the long war of the Ottomans against Venice and her allies and which deprived the Ottoman Empire of much of its European territory. If the Ottoman Empire was to be dismembered, the more France knew about it the better.

Tournefort conscientiously carried out the botanical part of his mission and brought home from Crete over 1,300 specimens. His search for plants took him and his party to remote mountain villages where strangers had never been seen before. 'There is no nation on earth', wrote Tournefort, 'more friendly than the Greeks,'¹¹ and the whole village would turn out to see them, inspecting and laughing at their dress, undergarments and hats. Tournefort was often asked to treat the sick, and usually prescribed one of the local plants, apart from an emetic for serious cases. Most of these patients were Greeks, but Tournefort was wary of treating Turks, especially if he expected to return to the village later, since he claimed to fear being bastinadoed if his cure did not work.

In fact, the Cretan villagers helped Tournefort more than he helped them. From them he learned the common names of over 500 plants, which he found were the same as those used by the ancient writers. 'I regarded the brains of these poor Greeks as so many living inscriptions,' he wrote, 'which preserved for us the names used by Theophrastos and Dioscorides. Although subject to certain changes, these living inscriptions will certainly last longer than the hardest marble, because they are renewed every day while marble is defaced or destroyed.'¹²

Tournefort spoke favourably of both the Turks and the Greeks of Crete, as being well built, energetic, strong and honest. He praised the public order in the island and said there were no hooligans, pickpockets, beggars, murderers or highway robbers, since the penalty for theft was death for Turk or Greek. He castigated only the Greeks who had joined the occupiers, those who had converted to Islam who were less honest than the true Turks and unlike them insulted Christians, and the Greeks who had taken service with the Venetians in their remaining island outposts and captured Turks for ransom, burned and sacked houses, attacked people and committed every sort of cruelty.

The study of the religions of the countries he visited was also part of Tournefort's task, and in two of his reports he described at length Greek Orthodoxy and the Islamic faith. He was critical of the Greek Church. Church offices were bought and sold, he reported, and the clergy at all levels were ignorant: 'Do not ask them the reason for their faith, since they are very badly educated.'¹³ However, this ignorance was the result of the miseries of the original enslavement by the Turks, which had driven the best-educated Greeks abroad. Apart from the general venality and ignorance of the Church there were particular aspects that Tournefort condemned: priests trained at the monasteries of Mt Athos were dangerous knaves, nuns were mostly reformed

prostitutes seeking an easy life, and there was nothing good to say of the excessive lamentations for the dead, by paid mourners whose apparent anguish was greater than that of those who wept naturally.

Tournefort examined religions rather as he examined his plants, looking at their external characteristics and determining what their use might be. Hence his attitude to religion was that of a worldly sceptic, reminiscent of Pascal's famous wager published 30 years before: 'God is, or he is not. Which option will you take? Let us weigh the gain and the loss in making your bet on the existence of God. If you win, you win the lot. If you lose, you lose nothing. So, without hesitation, bet on the existence of God.'¹⁴ Thus Tournefort saw the practice of religion as a matter of costs and benefits. He confessed, sardonically, that he would have made a very bad Greek because all their fasting made the price of salvation too high. He thought that the Greeks who converted to Islam sold their souls too cheaply, gaining only permission to wear Turkish dress and exemption from the poll tax, which was a mere five écus a year. And he believed Islam was the most seductive, and therefore the most dangerous, of all the false non-Christian religions, because it offered the same spiritual rewards as Christianity in the next world while allowing far more sensual pleasures in this one.

Tournefort might be elegantly detached about religious questions, but they continued to arouse strong feelings among the Greeks of Crete. Despite the loss of many Orthodox to Islam, the Greek Church was strengthened under the new Turkish regime. As early as 1647, when most of Crete was in Turkish hands and only Iráklion was holding out, the Turks had promised an Orthodox archbishop for Crete, and by 1659 there were twelve Orthodox bishops subordinate to him. Their jurisdiction covered the whole of Crete, though characteristically the Cretans in Sphakiá remained ruggedly independent. 'Up to now', wrote the archbishop of Crete in 1779, 'the Christians of the Sphakiá district have remained unprovided for by the church, owing to the roughness of the terrain and the tough character of the people.'¹⁵ Furthermore, the churches converted to mosques were mainly the Catholic churches in Iráklion, those of St Francis, St Peter, St Titus and – especially humiliating for Venice – St Mark. One Catholic church, St Matthew, was bought for the Orthodox by Panayiótis, the Greek interpreter for the Turks in the negotiations for the surrender of Iráklion, and became the nucleus of the Orthodox community.

However, the Orthodox Church in Crete soon became a battleground of warring factions. Now that it was united with the patriarchy in Constantinople, it was obliged to pay patriarchal taxes, an obligation confirmed by the Turkish administration. These taxes were resented, and within a decade payment was in arrears. Two parties developed, for and against the patriarchy, and the latter initially won the day. In 1715 a firman from the Sultan decreed that the Cretan Orthodox Church should now be independent of the patriarchy, and that the archbishop should be a native Cretan chosen by the people and the influential citizens, not imposed by the

patriarch in Constantinople. But the victory was short lived, as ten years later the firman was reversed and the Cretan Church again became subject to the patriarchy. The dissension continued, and it was only in 1735 that a satisfactory compromise was reached, with the appointment of an archbishop, Yerásimos, who was both an insider at the patriarchal court and a native Cretan. The Cretan Church was now firmly under the control of the patriarch, and as a pro-patriarchy Cretan poet wrote ‘Where there had been darkness, now there was light!’¹⁶

It was religion that determined the fate of many Cretans in the twentieth century. Unlike in Cyprus, there had been no mass importation to Crete of Turks from Anatolia. In part this was because the number of Cretan converts to Islam made it unnecessary, in part because it was impracticable, Crete being nearly 200 miles from the Turkish mainland as against 50 miles for Cyprus. But the Muslim element on Crete was ultimately removed in the 1923 exchange of populations on the basis of religion, throughout the Greek state, of which Crete was by then a part. Their places, and often their homes, were taken by refugee Christians moved from Turkey. In Crete there was strong mutual dislike at first between the indigenous Cretans and the new arrivals. As Michael Herzfeld puts it in his study of Réthimnon, ‘The refugees [from Turkey] lamented a fate that placed them among the rude peasants, while the rural Cretans called the refugees “Turks” – a clear acknowledgement that in some ways the newcomers were more alien than the [Cretan Muslims] who had departed.’¹⁷ The Muslim Cretans who had moved in the opposite direction, to a new life in Turkey, kept a strong bond with the land they had left behind, some warmly welcoming Christian visitors from Crete. Their painful nostalgia has persisted into the twenty-first century, as Bruce Clark found when researching his book on the population exchanges. An old lady who as a child lived in a village near Sitía in Crete says: ‘Of course we miss Crete, it was our homeland, and people always miss the place they left. My father had an orchard, growing olives and all kinds of fruit, so many fruit trees you could hardly get in there. It was a wonderful place.’ And an old man is full of a visit four years earlier to his Cretan home village, and says to a visiting Greek: ‘If you ever go to my home village, will you please, please tell them I’m sorry I didn’t thank them enough? Will you tell them I’m sorry I haven’t been back?’¹⁸

The Changing Ottoman Empire

In the sixteenth century the Ottoman Empire was at the height of its power and prestige. In 1516 Selim I added Syria to the empire and a year later Egypt, conquests that also made him guardian of the Holy Places of Mecca and Medina, and were thus a triumph in both military and religious terms. His son and successor Suleyman, the Magnificent or the Lawgiver, who reigned from 1522 to 1566, took Belgrade, Rhodes and Baghdad, and annexed Hungary. The empire now stretched from the Barbary coast in the western Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean, and from the southern tip of Greece to within a few miles of Vienna. But by 1853 Tsar Nicholas I of Russia could famously describe the Turk as ‘un homme gravement malade’, and in 1923 the empire, which had been ruled throughout by an unbroken line of descendants of the thirteenth-century founder Osman, was replaced by Ataturk’s republic.

Historians have long debated what changed the Ottoman Empire in the three centuries between the glorious days of Suleyman and its description as the sick man of Europe. In particular, was it a process of decline – the traditional view – or was the empire adapting, with some success, to changed circumstances? One historian, Daniel Goffman, who himself argues for adaptation, puts the decline view with some force: ‘If defeats on the battlefield, ostensibly insane Sultans, scandals in the imperial household, threats from reactionaries, rebellions in the provinces, chronically mutinous janissaries, and widespread bribery were not symptoms of decay, then what were they?’¹ Others see the decay idea as springing from a false analogy, mistakenly likening an empire to a living organism that makes a natural and inevitable progress from birth to maturity and then to deterioration and death. Another historian, Molly Greene, wearily describes the decline thesis as a meat-grinder, which converts all the facts into the homogenised elements of a single story rather than the distinct indicators of many different stories.

In the present context we are only partly concerned with whether the changes in the Ottoman Empire represent decline or adaptation, and with debating the exact period at which the changes began. Our main interest is in what changes actually occurred, and in the effect of these changes on the Greeks and on other non-Muslim subjects of the empire.

Broadly speaking, the changes can be seen in the power of the Ottoman

military; in Ottoman administration; perhaps at a deeper level in Ottoman psychology; and very definitely in the Ottoman economy. Daniel Goffman's list of Ottoman weaknesses is a good starting point.

There were certainly some military defeats, on both land and sea, though there is a 'but' attached to many of them. In 1565 the Ottomans failed, despite a long siege, to take Malta from the Knights of St John, although that was under Suleyman, when Ottoman power was thought to be at its height. In 1571 the Ottomans' success in taking Cyprus was immediately followed by their disastrous defeat by a Holy League fleet at Lepanto; but the Ottoman fleet was quickly rebuilt, though quality may have been sacrificed to speed of construction. The Holy League triumph at Lepanto was short lived; its fleet was soon disbanded and Venice, one of the Lepanto victors, accepted a humiliating peace treaty with the Ottomans only two years later. In the eastern part of the Ottoman Empire Baghdad was lost in 1624, but only briefly, and was recovered in 1638. In 1669 the Ottomans were strong enough to capture Crete, albeit after a prolonged siege at Iráklion. In 1683 they besieged Vienna without success; but the earlier sieges by Suleyman in 1529 and 1532 had also been failures. So far the Ottoman military record was mixed, but far from being catastrophic.

However, as we have seen, the last years of the seventeenth century brought major Ottoman reverses. In 1684 a new Holy League in which Austria and Venice were dominant attacked the Ottoman provinces in Europe from both north and south. In the northern offensive the Austrians drove them out of Hungary and pushed on beyond Belgrade to Skopje. In the south Venice seized the Peloponnese and advanced as far as Évia. The conflict was ended by the 1699 Treaty of Karlowitz by which Hungary, Belgrade and territory south as far as Skopje were ceded to Austria and the Peloponnese to Venice. But even these losses were temporary; in 1715 the Ottomans drove the Venetians out of the Peloponnese, and in 1739 Austria ceded back to the Ottomans Belgrade and most of the territory acquired 40 years earlier under the Treaty of Karlowitz.

Nevertheless, Hungary was permanently lost to the Ottoman Empire. The war with Russia from 1768 to 1774 brought further losses. By the 1774 Treaty of Kutchuk-Kainardji, the most humiliating that the Ottomans ever signed, they gave up territory in today's Romania and granted extensive navigation rights to Russia and to other vessels, including Greek merchant ships, which flew the Russian flag. The treaty also allowed Russia a right – vaguely worded but energetically used by Russia – to protect the Greeks and other Christians of the Ottoman Empire. Only now did the so-called Eastern Question begin to be asked: whether the Ottoman Empire would survive, and what would happen if it did not.

The problem for the Ottoman Empire was not so much that its forces were too weak on the battlefield but that they were too strong at home. The original army, dating back to the fourteenth century, had two main components. One

was the cavalry, the timar-holders living off their estates, liable for military service when summoned, and obliged to bring with them a number of armed retainers. The number of timar-holders is first reliably reported in 1525, when there were 10,600 in the European provinces and 17,200 in Asia Minor and Syria. Even if only a third were available at any one time, bringing an average of five retainers, they would form a force of about 50,000 men.

The other main element was the janissary corps of infantry, initially drawn exclusively from devshirme conscription. Originally a few hundred men forming the Sultan's personal bodyguard, their numbers were increased to about 10,000 by Mehmed the Conqueror and remained at that level until about 1550. But battlefield tactics were changing: battles were increasingly dominated by infantry using firearms rather than cavalry firing arrows or wielding swords, and the infantry fought from entrenched positions that cavalry could not easily overrun. So infantry became more important than cavalry, more janissaries were needed, and by 1600 their number had quadrupled to about 40,000. Janissary ranks were now open to volunteers and not restricted to recruits from the increasingly infrequent devshirme. Meanwhile the number of timar-holding cavalry was declining: they were less needed, and less effective, since comfortable landholders gave little thought to military preparedness, as the Venetians had discovered in their equivalent system in Crete. By the end of the seventeenth century the timars had been largely taken over by the treasury in Constantinople, and the rights to their revenues sold to tax farmers – in part to provide pay for the increased number of janissaries.

Almost from their inception the janissaries were a force to be reckoned with in the internal politics of the empire. It was largely due to the janissaries that in 1446 Mehmed II was deposed, to return to the throne five years later and win renown as the conqueror of Constantinople. Other Sultans were in effect deposed by the janissaries: Bayezid II in 1512, Osman II in 1622, and the mentally unstable Ibrahim I in 1648. In this last case at least the janissaries presented themselves as law-abiding guardians of the state who took care before acting to get approval from both the religious establishment and from Ibrahim's mother, who was acting as regent for him.

However, it was often the more basic issue of pay that sparked a janissary revolt. Even the earliest, the deposition of Mehmed II in 1446, was in part due to the janissaries being paid in debased coinage. There was a revolt for the same reason in 1589, when it was said that the new coins issued to the janissaries were 'as light as the leaves of the almond tree and as worthless as drops of dew'.² While the state treasury tried to reduce the cost of paying the janissaries by debasing the coinage, the janissaries turned to other ways of making money. They took up civilian trades, which meant that they were unwilling to move when called on to fight. Their commanders inflated the payrolls by including janissaries' children and janissaries long dead. It is remarkable that such a flawed system was still able to put such an effective

army in the field.

It was not until the beginning of the nineteenth century that Selim III attempted a radical reform, the establishment of an Army of the New Order to replace the janissaries. But the attempt met violent janissary opposition and was abandoned, those responsible losing their lives and Selim III losing his throne and ultimately his life as well. In 1826 the janissary corps was destroyed forever on a single June day of carnage in the capital's At Meydan Square, an occasion known in Turkish history as the Auspicious Event.

There were indeed some ostensibly insane Sultans, or at least ones who were mentally unstable. Perhaps the most extreme example was Mustafa I, who reigned briefly from 1617 to 1618 and again from 1622 to 1623. As one Turkish chronicler records, he was in the habit as Sultan of 'scattering the gold and silver coins with which he filled his pockets to the birds and to the fish in the sea and to paupers whom he met in the street'.³ Selim II (1566–74) was known as the Sot but it was in his reign that the Ottomans acquired Cyprus. The deranged Ibrahim I (1640–8) has already been mentioned, but it was under him that Crete, apart from Iráklion, was conquered.

Whatever the quality of the Sultans, the functioning of the Ottoman state largely depended upon the grand vizier. At some periods the office-holders alternated rapidly, the grand vizier being deposed and often executed at each setback. But a long period of stability began in the mid-seventeenth century under the remarkable Koprulu family. The first of these was Mehmed Koprulu, originally a devshirme conscript from Albania who served from 1656 to 1661, though already in his seventies when appointed. In 38 of the next 47 years the office was held by members of the Koprulu family – Mehmed's son Ahmed (1661–76) who successfully concluded the long siege of Iráklion, another son, two sons-in-law, and two nephews. The one major gap in Koprulu tenure was from 1683 to 1689 when an anti-Koprulu faction secured the office, and it was no coincidence that those were the years when the Ottoman Empire lost Hungary and the provinces south of Belgrade.

The first of the line, Mehmed Koprulu, showed how forceful action could deal with two of the other supposed signs of Ottoman decay: threats from reactionaries and rebellions in the provinces. From the early 1650s a call to return to the basic principles of Islam had been preached by a fiery preacher, Mehmed Kadizade, whose followers were called kadizadelis. Kadizade condemned not only the non-Islamic consumption of wine, coffee and tobacco, but also the religious institutions in general and the dervish orders in particular. His slogan was: 'Every innovation is heresy, every heresy is error, and every error leads to hell.'⁴ Mehmed Koprulu, after securing the support of the clerical establishment, rounded up the kadizadeli leaders and, refraining from execution, which he used against other opponents, simply exiled them to Cyprus. Mehmed Koprulu dealt as forcefully and more brutally in directing the campaign against a major rebellion in Anatolia. Any deserters from government forces to the rebels were executed on his orders, and possibly

1,000 such men were killed in a few days. The revolt ended when its leaders were lured to Aleppo and there treacherously killed by Mehmed Koprulu's commander, though not apparently with Mehmed Koprulu's complicity.

Finally there is the question of bribery and corruption. In the provinces this seems to have been widespread from an early date. A justice decree of 1609 issued by Sultan Ahmed I describes and condemns many examples. Troop patrols, in unnecessarily large numbers, were entering villages and seizing goods, often on the flimsy pretext of pursuing criminals. 'If somebody falls out of a tree,' says the decree, 'you make this out to be a murder, you go to a village, settle down, and in order to rout out the supposed killer you harass the people.'⁵

Furthermore the judges, the kadi, were descending with their retinues on villages to try supposed wrongdoers or on other legal business, and were taking goods without payment – sheep, chickens, oil, honey, barley, straw and wood are mentioned. Judges were also juggling with inheritance taxes, inflating the value of the inheritance to increase the tax, and reassessing and reimposing the tax several times on the grounds that the previous settlement was unjust. Finally the villagers who had suffered these extortions were forced to borrow from moneylenders, often at crippling rates of up to 50 per cent.

There was also bribery and corruption in Ottoman governing circles. It is sometimes assumed that these factors made effective government impossible, because officials had no interest in policy apart from bribes they might receive for supporting one faction or another, or revenge that they might wreak on their opponents. But factions and the attendant self-seeking were common in virtually all major European states of the time, and it would be hard to find one where policy was formed solely by a body of high-minded altruists. Suraiya Faroqhi, who has written extensively on the Ottoman Empire, will have none of the idea that the Ottomans were exceptional in this respect. 'In my view', she writes emphatically, 'it is an "orientalist" assumption of the most outmoded variety to postulate an atomized Ottoman elite unable to formulate even a loose consensual framework.'⁶

There is another view of Ottoman weaknesses that looks beyond particular instances to a deeper psychological flaw at the heart of the Ottoman system. This view was the staple of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Enlightenment commentators. It portrayed Ottoman power as based on a fantasy. The Sultan was, by virtue of his office, all powerful, his subjects including his highest officers being promoted, demoted or indeed executed at his will. But actual power was wielded by the grand vizier, though only so long as he enjoyed the Sultan's favour. Thus the Sultan's supposed omnipotence masked his actual abdication of power. He merely signified power rather than wielding it, while in person he might be, and often was, 'this feeble-minded, fatuous, weak, effeminate, trivial, spoiled, cowardly being lost in his lust and enjoyment: this half-human and sub-human being which the despot ultimately turns out to be'.⁷

This view is elaborated in detail by Alain Grosrichard in *The Sultan's Court*, a work that can be read in various ways. From one aspect it is an examination of how Enlightenment writers portrayed the Ottoman Empire, often to contrast its despotic otherness with the supposedly reason-based societies of Europe. The book can also be read as an application to the Ottoman Empire of the post-Freudian psychoanalytic ideas of Jacques Lacan. It is Lacan who provides the idea of enjoyment as central. Grosrichard, following Lacan, represents the Ottoman system as a mechanism for the exchange of enjoyment, or rather the particular form of enjoyment that Lacan calls 'jouissance'. In this scheme goods and all sources of pleasure, especially sexual, are channelled to the Sultan, while the subjects' enjoyment comes from providing these goods to the great personage at the centre, in whom they can see themselves reflected.

Finally, Grosrichard's book also points to the way in which all political systems are based on a fantasy. The ruler's power always depends on the symbols of power. For Montesquieu this symbol was the ruler's name: 'The inhabitants of those countries need only the name of a prince to govern them.'⁸ Charles XII of Sweden reduced the power of symbols to absurdity by telling his senate that he would send one of his boots to command them. The descriptions of a society as totalitarian or as liberal are merely 'two interchangeable languages to describe the same deception, off which every variety of political power lives'.⁹ One can conclude that the fundamental flaw in the Ottoman system of government was that the Sultan had absolute power of life and death but did not rule, while the grand vizier ruled but could lose his office and his life at the Sultan's whim. Such a skewed division of power was, of course, common in medieval courts. What was unique about the Ottoman system was that the skew was so pronounced and persisted for so long.

Underlying most of the failures of the Ottoman system was the weakness of the Ottoman economy, which can most obviously be traced in the progressive debasement of the Ottoman coinage. Debasement was the Ottoman response to the inflation that hit Europe as well as the Ottoman Empire in the sixteenth century. This inflation was partly due to population increase, and partly – some argue mainly – a result of the huge imports of silver to Spain from the silver mines of Spanish America. Thanks to these mines the world output of silver by the 1550s was some six times what it had been at the beginning of the century.

The basic Ottoman coin, minted from an alloy of silver and base metals, was the akche, known as the asper in Europe, both terms meaning white. As the value of the akche declined, higher value coins were introduced: in 1624 the piastre, worth three akches, and in 1690 the kurush, worth 40 piastres and therefore 120 akches. Debasement can be traced by following the silver content of the akche and its larger equivalents.

The silver content of the currency was relatively stable between the fall of

Constantinople in 1453 and 1585, but the following century saw a rapid fall in silver content, from 680 milligrams per akche in 1584 to 230 in 1683, a fall of two thirds. There was a further reduction of two thirds between 1690 and 1790, and yet another, of over half, by the 1820s. Catastrophic as this might seem, debasement averaged just under one per cent a year throughout the whole life of the Ottoman Empire between 1326 and 1922, fairly low by twentieth-century standards but high compared with other contemporary European states, especially the Ottomans' commercial and military rival, Venice.

With debasement of the coinage went devaluation, the progressive fall of the value of the Ottoman currency against other currencies. A marker is provided by comparison with the Venetian gold ducat, stable because it had virtually unchanging gold content. In 1453 there were roughly 40 akches to the ducat, and the figure was still much the same in 1590. But the following centuries brought big increases in the rate of devaluation, as of debasement. By 1690 the ducat cost not 40 akches but 105, and by 1790 the figure was 235, rising to 350 by the time the Venetian republic came to an end in 1797.

In theory devaluation should benefit a state's trade balance, through the mechanism known as the J-curve. After devaluation, exports become cheaper and in time increase, but imports become immediately more expensive: initial result, deficit – the downward curve of the J. But in time the volume of exports increases because they are cheap, and domestic consumers buy fewer of the expensive imports: result, surplus – the J's upward stroke.

However, this mechanism can work only in a reasonably open market economy, and the Ottoman state operated a largely command economy, hedged with government restrictions on exports, especially of war matériel and grain, and with government controls on prices. The economies of western Europe, often called mercantilist, were designed to develop industry and encourage exports. By contrast the Ottoman economy was operated with two main purposes: to finance the army and to maintain the Sultan and his palaces. In the Ottoman budget of 1669–70, which showed a deficit of over seven per cent even at that time of relative peace, pay for the army of nearly 100,000 men accounted for a third of all expenditure, and related army costs almost another third. Revenue for the Sultan's person and his palaces, including in one year nearly 100 tons each of raisins and sultanas, accounted for almost all the rest – just under 30 per cent, an astoundingly large amount even in the days of lavish expenditure in European courts. This left little money available for other uses: the navy six per cent, construction two per cent and civilian administration a mere one per cent.¹⁰

This makes clear that at the root of the weakness of the Ottoman economy were the demands of the army. Increasing numbers of troops – janissaries and mercenaries – had to be paid in cash, rather than living off their estates as the timar-holders had done. Throughout the life of the empire wars were almost continuous in Europe to the west, in Iran and Iraq to the east, in Egypt and

Syria to the south, and latterly against Russia to the north. Wars of expansion, bringing potential new wealth to the empire, ended with the acquisition of Crete in 1669. From then on wars were holding operations, and the frontiers on which they were largely fought were now a long way from the army's base in Constantinople. The empire had been founded on the principle of expanding conquest, but the expansion had reached its limits. And in any case it is broadly true that, as Fernand Braudel succinctly said, war is a waste of money.¹¹

How were the Greeks affected by this creeping weakness of their Ottoman rulers? One very obvious result was that war came to the territory of mainland Greece for the first time since the original Ottoman conquests of the fifteenth century. In the war of 1683–99 between the Ottomans and the Holy League led by Austria and Venice, the Venetians took the Peloponnese and held it until driven out by the Ottomans in 1715. In 1770 the Russians briefly occupied, with Greek support, some of the main Peloponnesian fortresses. But these upheavals were relatively short lived. More pervasive were the effects of a major development of the late seventeenth century: the progressive introduction of tax farming.

Tax farming was the Ottoman response to the problem of how to channel the resources tied up in timars to the central treasury. The timars were by now supporting a traditional cavalry that was deficient in almost every way: it was needed less, it was less available to serve, and less effective when it did so. The process involved converting the timars to private holdings, imposing taxes on them, and then farming out the collection of these taxes.

The first step was to get rid of the timar-holders by not granting new timars of a viable size, and reclaiming existing timars for the state. Reclaiming was not difficult. The state was entitled to take back any timar whose holder failed in his military duties or who died without heirs, and all timars had always been technically state property.

The second step was to introduce tax farming. The tax farmer paid the bid price over to the treasury, and kept for himself all the taxes he collected. Alternatively, he might sell on the tax-farming rights at a profit to subcontractors, who then needed to be even more rapacious. Not surprisingly, tax farmers were unscrupulous in wringing the maximum, legally or otherwise, from their victims in order to realise their profit. The system had obvious advantages for the treasury. It received tax payments wholly in cash rather than partly in kind, and at the beginning rather than at the end of the tax-collection process. Also the state treasury did not have to provide its own body of tax-collecting officials. But the system became increasingly oppressive. Once it was known that a particular area was profitable, the tax-farming rights were sold for ever-higher sums, requiring ever-harsher exactions from the peasants. There was a minor change for the better around 1700. From then on taxfarming rights were sold not for a few years at a time but for the lifetime of the tax farmer, thus giving him an interest in the long-

term prosperity of the peasants. Nevertheless the spread of tax farming, it has been said, accounted more than any other cause for the disruption of the order that had formerly ruled in the provinces.

The tax farmers soon found ways of converting the area over which they had tax-farming rights into private estates, known as chiftliks. These were often large, though a chiftlik, like an English farm, could be of any size. First the current landholder, whether a timar-holder or a peasant with his own plot of land, needed to be dispossessed. This might be done ostensibly legally, with the connivance of the local judiciary, or by driving the peasants into debt at exorbitant rates of interest, or simply by force. The peasant then had a stark choice: either to remain as a labourer for the new landholder, subject to his arbitrary dictates and without any of the legal rights of the past, or alternatively to flee, to a settlement in the mountains or to join a band of brigands. The loss of workers was usually of no great concern to the chiftlik owner, since land was converted from growing crops to the raising of livestock, which needed much less labour and was much more profitable. It was said that 'the sheep's foot turns the sand to gold.'¹²

At the same time as control was slipping away from the centre into the hands of provincial elites, the tax burden on the peasants was increasing. The two main extraordinary taxes had initially been demanded only in times of crisis, usually military campaigns. One of these was in cash, the other largely in kind, as grain or other goods for the army on campaign or for fortress garrisons. These two taxes were at first collected occasionally and as alternatives, then they became simultaneous, both being now paid in cash, and finally they became annual taxes. At the same time the poll tax was steadily increasing, and in the European provinces of the Ottoman Empire it quadrupled between 1574 and 1640.

All taxes, wrote Edward Gibbon, must at last fall upon agriculture, and the corollary is that taxes can destroy agriculture. In the Ottoman case, as a later historian has put it, 'The classes that lived on dues and taxes were engaged during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries on a long-drawn-out strangling of the unfortunate geese that laid their golden eggs.'¹³

Hunger and Disease

The main Ottoman taxation of agriculture fell on grain, a tax payable originally in kind but later increasingly in cash. But other factors too affected the price of grain: good or bad harvests, of course, as well as the demands of the army on campaign, and grain shortages elsewhere, as in Italy and Spain in the mid-sixteenth century, which pushed up the price of grain in the Ottoman Empire. Also grain was requisitioned from the provinces to feed the population of Constantinople. The quantities involved were enormous: in 1700 the capital needed 500 tons of wheat a day and the city's bakers had to hold a three months' supply. What grain was left for the provinces therefore became more expensive.

In statements by historians about grain crops, production levels and prices, it is not always clear what crop is meant. Wheat has throughout history been the most important grain in the Mediterranean, including Greece. It is the best for making bread because it is rich in gluten, and the higher the gluten content the lighter, the more porous and the more digestible the bread produced. Rye is more usual in northern Europe and is little found in Greece. Maize is common in Greece. It does not have enough gluten for bread making, but is rich in protein, and is often used for animal fodder. Barley, like maize, is common in Greece but cannot produce bread, and as a food source it is often added to soups or stews. Oats, a highly adaptable crop, are in Greece mainly used for animal feed. Greek grain production in 1975 gives an indication of the relative importance of different grain crops: wheat over half the total, barley a quarter, maize fourteen per cent, with small amounts of oats and rice making up the rest.

Kóstas Kostís, in his book on food crises in Greece during the Ottoman period, includes tables of wheat prices in the Balkans as a whole. These show much greater variation than the average wheat prices for Europe generally. European prices roughly doubled on a steadily rising curve between 1540 and their peak in the seventeenth century and then settled at a slightly lower level. By contrast the average Balkan wheat price was much more volatile. It multiplied around ten times between 1695 and 1725 and, having fallen back to its previous level, rose by a similar factor between 1780 and 1810. Average Balkan prices for all grain crops taken together varied even more. In 1710–14 it was fifteen times higher than its level only a few decades earlier, and in

1720–4 it was over 50 times that level, before again dropping back. Very often, and especially at these times of huge price fluctuation, Greeks of both town and country would have been in a continual state of uncertainty and anxiety about whether they could afford, or even obtain, their next meal.

Sometimes a link can be seen between prices and good or bad harvests. In the Thessalonika area there was a poor harvest in 1739, though even in October a unit quantity of wheat cost only a little over one piastre. But by December 1739 the price was five piastres, and by May 1740, shortly before the next harvest, had risen to 25 piastres. However, the 1740 harvest was a good one and the price fell back to its original one-piastre level throughout the following winter. Expectations could multiply this effect: if a poor harvest was anticipated, grain for sale would be held back in the hope of higher prices later. But this gamble did not always pay off, as Thomas Hardy's Mayor of Casterbridge, even in the more predictable conditions of Victorian Dorset, found to his cost.

Kóstas Kostís has also tried to show if the weather was the main influence on harvests, and therefore prices, by tabulating references to the weather against references to high grain prices and to famine. Kostís readily admits that the effort is doomed; the references depend on what happened to be recorded and whether that record survived, and it is often unclear exactly what the weather was, what region is being described, and what is meant by 'high price' or 'famine'. All the same there is much of interest in these tabulations.

The commonest references are to food shortages and high prices in, surprisingly, the town of Thessalonika and the region of Thessaly. These should have been two of the richest places in Greece, Thessalonika because of its thriving port, and Thessaly from its huge production of wheat. Nevertheless in both these places either food shortage or high prices or both are reported in roughly one year in five of the eighteenth century. Sometimes these are directly related to the arrival of the Turkish army, marching to Hungary in 1686, on its way to the Peloponnese to drive out the Venetians in 1715, or to suppress the Orlov revolt in 1770. The other and more persistent food shortages can probably be attributed to Constantinople's constant demand for grain.

Thessalonika suffered not only from food crises but from other afflictions, notably fires and diseases. Thessalonika was apparently in a uniquely favourable location: it fronted a fine harbour, and was on the Via Egnatia, the main road running west from Constantinople. As a result it was the most prosperous town in Greece, but a further consequence was that it suffered most from all the tribulations that affected towns. Because it was on the Via Egnatia Turkish armies regularly passed through it. Because its largely wooden houses were closely crammed together there were frequent fires, which continued to be a hazard into the twentieth century. The last serious one, known as the Great Fire, raged over a weekend in August 1917, destroying nearly half the town and the houses of 80,000 people. The effects

would have been even worse if the British, French and Italian troops stationed there – the derided Gardeners of Salonika – had not helped to fight the flames and look after the homeless.

The crews of ships, which entered Thessalonika's thriving harbour from all over the Mediterranean, brought diseases with them, especially bubonic plague and its variants, haemorrhagic and pneumonic plague. Thessalonika faced the same predicament as other great Mediterranean ports: in Venice in 1575–7 plague reportedly killed 50,000 people, at least a quarter of the population, and in Marseille in 1581 plague left only 5,000 alive, while in the eighteenth century Smyrna suffered 55 plague years and Constantinople 65. In some centuries Thessalonika was more fortunate, but only relatively so, with plague one year in three. One of the worst was in 1740, when it was recorded that 'Christians died at the rate of 14 a day, as many as 147 Turks perished on one day, and the Jewish death rate was 31 persons daily. In all, the dead numbered 1,337 Christians – that is, those whom the priest buried – 2,239 Turks, and 1,935 Jews.'¹

We have a first-hand account of the Thessalonika plague of 1724 from a Ukrainian political exile, Pylyp Orlyk, who was living there at the time. At the first sign of plague he tried to leave the town for the country, but as an émigré he needed official permission to go, which was steadily refused for several days before the English consul intervened. Orlyk, with a party of English merchants – only the rich could afford to flee – eventually settled in the village of Galátista, some 25 miles south-east of Thessalonika on the road leading to Mt Athos, though the villagers were naturally very reluctant to accept them. Back in Thessalonika later in the year Orlyk was alarmed to discover that the coat made for him just before he left, and which he had worn all summer, was the work of a Jewish tailor already suffering from the plague symptom of swelling in the armpit. 'He could hardly finish his job', wrote Orlyk, 'for the pain which tormented him, and as soon as he got back home he laid down on his bed. When I asked them today why they hadn't told me, these heathens answered that if I had known about it, I wouldn't have wanted the coat.'² One feels for the Jewish tailor in his predicament, struggling to finish what he knows is his last garment and to leave a little extra money for his family – yet aware that by doing so he is handing a potential death sentence to the wearer.

Some of the diseases affecting Thessalonika were epidemic – plague, cholera, typhus – and others were endemic: scabies, leprosy and malaria. There was a dangerous breeding ground for malarial mosquitoes in the pits of stagnant water just west of Thessalonika's town walls, on the flat area where the main railway station now stands, and malaria was particularly prevalent in Yannitsá some 30 miles west of Thessalonika. Malaria was still a menace to the troops of the Gardeners of Salonika. There were over 30,000 cases in 1916 and nearly double that figure in 1918. Necessity being the mother of invention, the scale of the problem led to a breakthrough in cure. Two whole

troop divisions, full of malaria, were brought back from Thessalonika to Dieppe and given quinine doses systematically rather than intermittently as before. Almost all the men were cured and were again, as it was chillingly recorded, 'fit for the front'.

Malaria has been present in Greece since classical times, and endemic from about 400 BC. There was a severe outbreak in Athens at the time of the Peloponnesian war. It was at this time that Hippocrates noticed the connection between malaria and marshes, and malaria was called marsh fever, as it still is in Greece in the term *elonosía*. In the sixteenth century Cyprus had such a bad reputation for malaria that ships' captains taking pilgrims to the Holy Land had to agree not to put in there for more than three days. Malaria seems also to have been prevalent in Crete, not only from the marsh-dwelling mosquito but also from a variant that lives in mountain streams.

The first systematic study of malaria in Greece was made in 1827 by John MacCulloch, who improbably combined a career as an army surgeon with becoming an authority on the geology of Scotland. His book *Malaria* also covered Italy, France and Spain. He described what he believed were the symptoms of malaria: yellow skin that pits on pressure, flaccid hair and scanty beard, enlarged spleen and premature ageing. He also noted the effects on behaviour: the apathy of those affected, who 'seeking solitude, shunning society and amusements alike, without affections, without interest in any thing, make no exertions to better their condition: not even to avoid the sources of danger which surround them, or to take the most common precautions that are pointed out'.³

MacCulloch believed that this apathy led to every sort of reprehensible behaviour and he did not hesitate to moralise about it: 'Not to dwell on this disgusting picture,' he wrote,

I must content myself with naming abortion, infanticide, universal libertinism, drunkenness, want of religion, gross superstitions, as the leading features: besides which, it is further said that while murders are common, a large proportion of the cases are those of premeditated and cautious assassination, by poison or otherwise: all the vices, says my authority, being of a mean and not of a bold character.⁴

But MacCulloch could be more sympathetic, and indeed poetic, in describing areas where malaria prevails:

The fairest portions are a prey to this invisible enemy, its fragrant breezes are poison, the dews of its summer evenings are death. The banks of its refreshing streams, its rich and flowery meadows, the borders of its glassy lakes, the luxuriant plains of its overflowing agriculture, the valley where its aromatic shrubs regale the eye and perfume the air, these are the chosen seats of this plague, the throne of Malaria. Death here walks hand in hand with the sources of life, sparing none: the labourer reaps his harvest but to die, or he wanders amid the luxuriance of vegetation and wealth, the ghost of man, a sufferer from his cradle to his impending grave: aged even in childhood, and laying down in misery that life which was but one disease.⁵

Malaria continued to be endemic in Greece until long after MacCulloch's day. In 1905 the Greek Anti-Malaria League was formed. This body for the

first time started to collect national data on the prevalence of the disease, previously estimated only from scattered hospital records and general mortality tables. In 1907 the league, quoting MacCulloch extensively, appealed to the government for action to drain the marshes and control the supply of quinine, previously much adulterated, and a measure establishing a government monopoly of quinine was passed within a year. As one of the league's supporters had said, the Greek peasant valued quinine as highly as he did bread.

Until the discovery of quinine the cures for malaria, as for virtually all diseases, were those prescribed by tradition. One remedy was the so-called Lemnian earth, said to be 'an infallible cure of all agues taken in the beginning of the fit with water, and drank so two or three times'. Its extraction from the ground was witnessed by Galen, the prolific medical writer of the second century AD, and the French traveller Carlier de Pinon heard about it when his ship passed L  mnos in the 1570s, though he did not actually land on the island. Several camel loads, he wrote, are extracted on one day of the year, packaged into small pieces and sent to the Sultan, who makes presents of it to ambassadors and foreign princes. 'These pieces are round, the thickness of a finger, and the size of a double ducat, of a mingled greyish colour, verging slightly on pink.' It was already being copied: 'It proves its worth daily, unless the substance sold by the apothecaries of Constantinople and other places is used: these people have nothing but what is counterfeit, and even sell clay from Armenia as if it were from Lemnos.'⁶

A century later Dr John Covell visited L  mnos and witnessed the extraction, of which he gives more details. On the edge of an extinct volcano, he says, a little clear spring washes down 'a kind of milky bogge'. The sediment, which is 'soft and unctuous', is taken out on only one day a year, the feast of Christ the Saviour in August, with a priest present to say the liturgy. When partially hardened it is made into small tablets, each stamped with the seal of L  mnos, hence its alternative name of *terra sigillata* or sealed earth. As well as curing all agues, says Covell, 'Their women drink it to hasten childbirth, and to stop the fluxes that are extraordinary, and they count it an excellent counter-poyson, and have got a story that no vessel made of it will hold poison, but immediately splinter in a thousand pieces.'⁷

One can see in all this some canny marketing. The cure-all claims for Lemnian earth increased demand, and the restrictions on extracting it increased the price. The Lemnian seal guaranteed that it was genuine, and the association with Christ the Saviour could only enhance its curative reputation. In the early years of Turkish occupation it was reserved for the Sultan, but later production must have increased or the counterfeiters, eager as always to exploit a luxury brand, must have become even more active. Hence it became widely available not only in Constantinople but also in Europe as a whole, where it has been described as the universal European panacea. It was still used medicinally on L  mnos in the early twentieth century but now seems to

have disappeared, and with it a colourful piece of historic folklore.

In the Greek towns a sufferer from disease might be treated by a doctor with some medical training, and Cretan and Jewish graduates of the Padua medical school were often found, though even in the late nineteenth century there were still many unlicensed doctors and pharmacists. Even doctors who were trained and licensed could be unreliable. In the 1820s during the war of independence the American philhellene doctor Samuel Gridley Howe had to prevent a Greek doctor from making a huge incision to cure what was only a bruise.

In the countryside the only recourse was to traditional folk medicine. For the centuries we are considering there are scattered and anecdotal references to these traditional methods, but the most coherent accounts come from the systematic studies of Greek rural life first undertaken in the 1950s. One might well ask if such recent researchers give a true picture of earlier times, but the answer is almost certainly yes. Two of these sociologists, Richard and Eva Blum, who studied the healing, health and related beliefs of rural Greeks, state categorically that ‘there is no major orientation or set of assumptions about life, death or the supernatural which cannot be found to have ancient antecedents,’⁸ and they regularly noted parallels between medical practices recorded in antiquity and what they found in their own day. Unless one assumes that ancient beliefs and practices died out at some stage and later returned in the same form – which is highly improbable, especially in communities without written records – it is reasonable to conclude that the traditions continued unbroken from antiquity to our own times, and were a persistent and often dominant factor in the lives of ordinary people.

Richard and Eva Blum produced two outstanding studies of Greek rural life in the 1950s and 1960s, concentrating on health and healing. They worked in an area – whose exact location they scrupulously protected – not far from the sea and opposite Évia. They studied two villages and a group of families of local Sarakatsani, shepherds regularly moving their flocks between the mountains in summer and the plains in winter. A third study of equal value by John Campbell is of the Sarakatsani of the region north of Iánnina. The southern Sarakatsani studied by the Blums had migrated from the north only a few generations earlier, and the two accounts of them are naturally very similar.

What did the villagers believe were the causes of disease? Their answers take us back into the past. There were basically six types of cause mentioned, any of which might be regarded as the origin of a particular disease:

☐ Natural, such as living conditions or diet;

☐ Emotions, such as frustration or unrequited love;

☐ Occult influences, such as omens or dreams;

☐ Human magic, whether or not intentional. A look from an Evil Eye can do harm without the possessor of the Eye knowing it. Sorcery or witchcraft, by contrast, inflicts harm intentionally;

☐ Natural magic, for example from the sun, the moon, fire, animals such as snakes, or smells;

Only for the first of these, illness from natural causes, was the cure in any way scientific and it was recognised that better hygiene might be the answer. One villager said: 'People are more vulnerable to illness if they don't wash, if they are dirty. Some don't keep their house or body clean; they eat all kinds of dirty things – foods that are unwashed, or old, or otherwise soiled.'⁹ Many natural products were also thought to be helpful. Some were used alone, such as olive oil, honey, garlic or oleander leaves with which the sufferer was rubbed all over. Others were applied in seemingly bizarre combinations. There was a cream made of beans, olive oil and soap, used to cure abscesses. Even more strange was 'mouse oil', for cuts and earache: 'What I do is to take baby mice caught when still hairless and blind, put them in a bottle of olive oil and leave them in that oil for at least one year in the sun. The longer it stays there in the sun the better. If you use it for cuts you stir it, for ears you do not. It is called "balsamo" and it stinks.'¹⁰

Even these treatments, perceived as medicinal, were usually applied in some ritual setting, and rituals were involved in countering all diseases, whatever their cause. The rituals involved incantations, often accompanied by prescribed gestures. Some were simple: 'When as children we had pimples with pus, the old women told us to tread on the cloth which was used to clean the oven and say the words, "Let the pimple disappear as this cloth will disappear." We always threw the cloth away.'¹¹

Much more elaborate was the incantation used to cure several afflictions: the effects of the Evil Eye, a stomach complaint known as the wandering navel, and heart disease. This formula runs to some 200 words, and invokes birds, honey, milk, Christ, St Peter and St Paul, and a crooked man on a crooked road with a crooked basket. Other magical procedures involved amulets, which might contain gunshot to keep away supernatural beings, a blue stone to ward off the Evil Eye, or incense, bread or herbs. Numbers were also important elements of the prevention or cure of illness. 'A charm to prevent miscarriages was made with forty coins, begged in forty homes, and blessed by forty liturgies.'¹² Seven blessings and prayers were used against sorcery; diabetes was cured by eating herring intestines for three days.

The folk healers who conducted these procedures were usually local wise women, though some were men and some were outside the village, even as far off as Athens. One folk healer particularly respected and liked by the Blums was Maria. She lived in the village, understood suffering as she had lost three children of her own, accepted no fee and used science, magic and religion sometimes simultaneously. By contrast priests were only rarely called on to conduct healing prayers or exorcisms. This was in part because at this time they lived in the main village of the region, rarely visiting the other villages and expecting a gratuity when they did so. It is likely that priests had a much larger role as healers in the past, when they lived among their parishioners and

in many ways shared their lives.

An outsider might dismiss the folk healing methods as irrational superstition, and the country people who followed them as victims of trickery, but that would be too easy. First, the principles of folk medicine were based on a coherent and complex view of the world. This view was most fully expressed by the Sarakatsani, wanderers whose living conditions were primitive and who had been wholly illiterate until a few generations earlier, but – or perhaps as a result – were found particularly friendly, communicative and articulate. They believed firmly in God. John Campbell wrote: ‘I have met no Sarakatsanos who doubts the existence of God. Such a question seems to them unintelligent. A man takes out his watch and asks, “Somebody made this watch, is it possible that nobody made the world?”’¹³ God provides everything, from giving a man children to sending rain to make the grass grow. The sheep itself is a sacred animal, and is sacrificed at important church festivals. But God also judges and punishes the sins that interrupt communion with God. This communion can be maintained or restored through symbolic acts. These include, besides ritual animal sacrifices, taking part in church services, prayers for the intercession of the Mother of God or the saints, and regularly making the sign of the cross in daily life in recognition of Christ – ‘Christ is our brother,’ the Sarakatsani say.¹⁴

Over against God stands the Devil, the basic cause of evil. The Devil has corrupted with sins the good earth that God has created: ‘The Devil has the earth, God the Heavens.’¹⁵ For some sins a man is personally responsible: impiety, neglect or abuse of family and mistreatment of those outside the family. Other sins, inherited from Adam, are ancestral: sensuality and especially the envy that is inevitably present when resources are limited. These sins, being inherited, are not blameworthy, but a man shows his nobility by struggling against them as best he can.

The Devil takes many supernatural forms that can either lead into sin or inflict illness on men or animals. These include the nereids who appear as seductively beautiful maidens, the *kallikántzari* who are thieves, the *koukouúdh*i associated with the bubonic plague, and many others. These can be warded off by a variety of symbolic objects or rituals, some with links to the church. Among the objects are salt, fire, the red egg dyed at Easter or the head of a viper blessed by the church. The rituals include firing a gunshot with the left hand or a black-handled knife forming a cross with its scabbard.

The consistency and power of this belief system are clear. God is approached through the symbolic, the words of prayer and the rituals of the liturgy. Equally the Devil is fended off by incantations and symbolic acts. Even modern medicine cannot shake the system: a man may never have seen a nereid, but he has never seen a microbe either. Modern and traditional medicine are seen as simply different techniques for achieving the same result.

Furthermore, folk healing was useful in several important ways. It gave sufferers and their families something practical to do about the ailment, it

provided a label for it, gave hope for a cure and information about the expected outcome. Folk healing methods could work by suggestion: if the wise woman tells you your headache will go as a result of her ministrations, it may very well do so. Or the treatment could simply be perceived to work: a sufferer from a short-term or intermittent illness goes to a folk healer and then recovers – but would have recovered anyway.

This reasoning, of course, has two major flaws. It assumes that if a treatment precedes a cure then the treatment causes the cure. Also it ignores discrepancies: if the treatment does not produce a cure it is assumed that there was something amiss in the treatment, so the system remains intact and can never be found to be mistaken. But as Richard and Eva Blum eloquently put it, ‘Rationality is a luxury. It can flourish only when protected and nourished; people who live in misery can hardly afford it; its magnificent edifice cannot be ordinarily sustained when there come those awful challenges of dire disease, social disorder, or the deprivation of love. In a sense then rationality can be sustained only by power: either the power of the individual to control events or the power to control himself.’¹⁶

It is often maintained that, during the centuries of foreign rule, by Turks and others, two things sustained the Greek people and linked them to the illustrious past of Byzantium and of ancient Greece. These are the Orthodox religion and the Greek language. Their defining role has been the exalted thesis of politicians, Church leaders and intellectuals. But we should not overlook a more humble third element, the beliefs and the practices of ordinary rural folk. Their view of the world sometimes overlapped with Church doctrine but was in the main independent of it. This other strand, central to the lives of so many, was an equally important element of Greek continuity.

Travellers to Greece

The earliest travellers to Greece were usually ambassadors or traders, and diplomacy and trade were closely linked. Later the interest turned to studying, and often removing, the antiquities of Greece. Throughout the period the travellers came mainly from France and Britain. France was involved in trading agreements and intermittent alliances with the Ottoman Empire, Britain was concerned mainly with trade, and both were interested in antiquities, prompted by learned societies or royal patronage. By contrast there were few travellers from Germany. Johann Winckelmann, famous for his books on the arts of ancient Greece, never set foot in the country, but relied on reports from a pupil and the study of reproductions in Italy.

Over the two centuries between the late sixteenth and the late eighteenth the travellers' views of the Greeks swung from initial dismissal of them to eventual fervent support. At the beginning of the period the travellers often treated the Greeks with mockery bordering on contempt, but in time the Greeks were given increasing attention and some respect. Finally in 1770 the Orlov revolt, catastrophic failure though it was, raised the prospect of the liberation of Greece from the Turks and led to the wave of philhellenism that played no small part in the eventual achievement of Greek independence. The travellers' accounts formed the views of Europe about Greece, but the process was two way: prevailing ideas in Europe influenced what the travellers expected to find, often at the cost of direct observation.

In the 150 years from the fall of Constantinople to around 1600 few travellers visited Greece. It was difficult to get to, dangerous to travel in and of little interest as a backward part of the Ottoman Empire. Greece then was about as attractive to visitors as, say, the remoter parts of China are today. Those who did visit any part of Greece generally did so with a specific purpose, but fortunately were also often interested in the Greeks and how they lived.

An example was the French naturalist Pierre Belon, whose account of his travels was published in 1553. He had read about the plants, animals and minerals of Greece in the ancient texts. 'I am determined', he wrote, 'to go and see them in the place of their birth,' and he was also keen to acquire any knowledge 'worthy of being communicated to our nation'.¹ This included his opinions on the Greeks, which were on the whole derogatory. He particularly

deplored their lack of education: ‘All the Greeks in both [Turkish and Venetian] areas are in such an amazing state of ignorance that there is not a single city in the entire country that has a university and not a trace of pleasure in learning the arts and sciences.’ The monks of Mt Athos were no better: ‘Among the six thousand Caloyers, who live on the mountain in such a great multitude, one can scarcely find in each monastery two or three who know how to read and write. This is because the prelates and the patriarchs of the Greek church, enemies of philosophy, excommunicated all the priests and monks who possessed, wrote, or read books other than those of theology.’ But Belon approved of the girls of Chíos, as did many later travellers. ‘Their beauty, grace, and loving courteousness’, he wrote, ‘disarm all the visitors inclined to gallantry. Their appearance is such that one would judge them to be nymphs rather than mortal women or girls.’²

Some 50 years after Belon, Greece was visited by the Scotsman William Lithgow, whom we have already met debunking the myth of Arcadia. Born in Lanark about 1582 Lithgow left Scotland, probably in 1602, after some scandal over a girl at which he only obscurely hints. Between 1609 and 1621 he made three long journeys, the first to Greece, Constantinople and the Holy Land, the second to the Barbary states of north Africa, and the third to Spain, from where he planned to go on to Ethiopia but was imprisoned in Malaga as a spy and tortured, after which he returned to England. His full account of his travels after leaving Scotland was published in 1632 as *The Totall Discourse of the Rare Adventures and Painefull Peregrinations of Long Nineteene Yeares Travayles*.

Lithgow’s book had all the ingredients for popular success. On a practical level it was a useful travel guide, summarising the history of places he visited and telling the traveller exactly how much he would have to pay – in chickens (Venetian sequins) or Spanish pistolls (pistolets, a gold coin precursor of the peseta) – for a guide or for access to the Holy Places. His style of writing was quirky and oddly attractive. It was marked by fine fanciful phrasing of the kind made popular by John Lyly in his 1578 novel *Euphues* and so known as euphuism. Lithgow’s vocabulary too was individual: ‘scelerate’ or ‘ruvidous’ for ‘wicked’, ‘fatigated’ for ‘fatigued’ and ‘dispopulosity’ for ‘under-population’. The book was further enhanced by Lithgow’s self-abasing dedication of it to Charles I, in which he disingenuously claims that it is written ‘with a homely and familiar Stile, no ways fit for Sovereignty to peruse’.³

But the book’s main elements of popular appeal were perhaps sex and adventure. Lithgow was interested in all varieties of sexual activity, whether ‘venereal tilting’ as he called it, or sodomy, or what he describes as ‘a twofold kind of voluptuous abomination which my conscience commands me to conceale’.⁴ He also lists the number of brothels in large towns, though how he arrives at the numbers is not clear: over 40,000 in Constantinople, and 15,000, of which 3,000 were homosexual, in Fez.

Adventures are plentiful. They invariably present Lithgow in a heroic role, and sometimes strain credulity. He always travelled on foot ('pedestriall I'), and was regularly attacked by robbers and murderers, from whom his quick-wittedness always saved him. In the deserts of Palestine Lithgow and his companions were lost at night without a compass, but Lithgow's knowledge of the North Star put them on the right course. Off the Ionian islands Lithgow's ship was attacked by a Tunisian pirate galley and the captain and the passengers were prepared to surrender, but it was Lithgow who took the lead, stiffening the captain's resolve and getting the passengers to man the guns. The pirate was successfully fought off.

Lithgow maintained that the object of his travels was to pursue not any particular branch of knowledge but 'the science of the world', that is knowledge of how other people live which, he said, can only be acquired by travellers.⁵ It might be expected therefore that Lithgow would have much of interest to say about the Greeks, but one would be largely disappointed. He mentions the helpfulness of his Greek laundress on Crete, the kindness of the islanders of Siphnos, and praises the Cypriots as 'of great civility, hospitality to their neighbours, and exceedingly affectionated to strangers'. He makes occasional political observations; the Cretans would prefer Turkish rule to Venetian, and 'if Christian Princes could concord, and consult together, it were an easie thing in one yeare to subdue the Turkes, and roote out their very names from the earth.'⁶

The main reason for this paucity of comment was Lithgow's bigotry. For him every category of people was already labelled. Catholics were bad, 'Snaky Papists' who 'runne galloping post to Hell', and Protestants were good. The Turks, he said, were courageous but never kept their promises and were addicted to sodomy, while the Egyptians were rude and barbarous. The Jews were naturally subtle, hateful and avaricious, and the Greeks 'wholly degenerate from their Auncestors in valour, virtue and learning'.⁷ Such prejudice is rightly called blind, and it is paradoxical that later travellers, mainly concerned with their own branch of knowledge such as archaeology or botany, tell us more about the Greeks than Lithgow with his boast that he is studying the comprehensive science of the world.

In the time of Lithgow and Belon a low opinion of the Greeks was commonplace. One charge against them was that they were drunken and dissipated. This was partly due to the classical Latin writers, who were then much better known than those of ancient Greece. Thus the Latin verbs 'graecari' or 'pergraecari' meant to be like a Greek, dissipated and effeminate (Plautus and Horace). To drink in the Greek fashion, 'Graeco more', meant to drink a lot (Cicero). Belon's contemporary Rabelais repeated this charge, calling the Greeks 'buveurs eternalz', though the persistence of the idea of the Greeks as drunkards may have been due simply to the popularity of Greek wines in Europe.

The other main charge against the Greeks was that they were cheats. This

too was derived from the ancient Latin writers: 'Graeciae mendacia' (Pliny), 'Greek faith' meaning no faith at all (Plautus again), and in Virgil's *Aeneid*, probably the best known Latin work during the Renaissance, the condemnation by the Trojan Aeneas of the Greeks' deceitful use of the Trojan horse, and the poem's most famous line about Greek gifts, 'Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes.' St Paul reinforced this idea. Even a Cretan, he claimed, had said that all Cretans are liars, and he accused the Corinthians, and therefore it was assumed all Greeks, of an even wider range of moral failings, as fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, thieves, drunkards and extortioners.⁸

By contrast the Turks were usually well regarded, in part because of another link to the *Aeneid*. The Turks (Turchi) were thought to be the descendants of the Trojans (Teucri in the *Aeneid*). Thus an English chaplain on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem in 1506 wrote that 'all the country of Troy is the Turk's own country by inheritance, and that country is properly called now Turkey, and none other.'⁹ Mehmed the Conqueror, in a letter allegedly sent to the Pope, asked why the Italians, descendants of the Trojan Aeneas, were opposed to the Turks: 'We are surprised that the Italians are against us, and we can hardly believe it. For we have a natural inclination to love them. They draw their origin from the Blood of Troy and have thence their original nobility and power. Now, we are the ancient heirs of that same blood and power, and our ancestors, who were the issue of the great king Priam and his line, have increased and improved them.'¹⁰

However, in the sixteenth century there were more up-to-date reasons for respecting the Turks, to be seen in the reports of Ogier de Busbecq, Habsburg ambassador to Constantinople between 1555 and 1560. The Turks were then regarded as invincible, a reputation not yet dented by their 1571 defeat at Lepanto. The Sultan, wrote Busbecq, 'stands before us with all the terror inspired by his own successes and those of his ancestors. Like a thunderbolt he smites, shatters and destroys whatever stands in his way. He roars like a lion along our frontier seeking to break through.'¹¹ But Busbecq was partly motivated by a wish to warn of the weaknesses of his own society: 'On their side are the resources of a mighty empire: strength unimpaired, experience and practice in fighting, a veteran soldiery, habituation to victory, endurance of toil, unity, order, discipline, frugality and watchfulness. On our side is public poverty, private luxury, impaired strength, broken spirit, lack of endurance and training: the soldiers are insubordinate, the officers avaricious: there is contempt for discipline, licence, recklessness, drunkenness and debauchery are rife; and worst of all, the enemy is accustomed to victory and we to defeat.'¹²

Busbecq was one of the earliest ambassadors to the Sultan's court. The first French ambassador, Jean de la Forêt, had been appointed in 1535, and a commercial treaty between France and the Ottoman Empire followed a year later. For England, by contrast, trade preceded diplomacy. In 1553 an

Englishman, Anthony Jenkinson, was granted trading privileges throughout the Ottoman Empire. In 1580 the privileges were extended to all English traders, a year later Elizabeth I gave a royal charter to the Turkey (later Levant) Company, and in 1583 William Harborne became the first English ambassador to Constantinople. Diplomacy and trade were closely linked, and until the early nineteenth century the salaries of the English ambassadors, though they were representatives of the sovereign, were paid by the Levant Company.

Many of the early ambassadors saw little of Greece, perhaps only stopping briefly at some of the Aegean islands when sailing to Constantinople. It was often their chaplains who travelled more widely, such as Dr John Covel, chaplain to successive English ambassadors in the 1670s, who gave us an eyewitness account of the annual extraction of Lemnian earth. Covel also produced, at the request of three English bishops, a book entitled *What Are the Sentiments of the Oriental Church of the Greek Orthodox*. In Covel's view these sentiments were pretty flexible: of certain Greek clerics who believed in the transubstantiation of the Eucharist bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ he wrote: 'I make no doubt, but that for reward they would declare directly against it.'¹³

Those who visited Greece as agents of diplomacy or trade could expect some protection from the representatives of their home governments, but those who travelled for other reasons were on their own. They had to rely on letters of introduction to high-ranking Turkish officials and a janissary to accompany them. The letters usually prompted a friendly welcome and the janissaries warded off most attacks, but nevertheless the dangers were considerable. The travellers risked capture or robbery by raiders at sea, and attacks by brigands on land, especially in mainland Greece. Some fell sick and died. One Frenchman, Joachim Bocher, who discovered the temple of Apollo at Bassae in the Peloponnese, was murdered there in the 1670s, apparently for the silver buttons on his coat. Francis Vernon, travelling widely in Greece at the same period, was a polymath, an astronomer and mathematician who knew seven or eight languages, and has been credited with writing the best account of Greek antiquities up to that time. Vernon survived being twice captured by pirates, and was nearly shot, on suspicion of being a spy, while taking measurements of the Theatre of Dionysus below the Akropolis. But an English friend had often warned him that 'he would come to some ill end with all his knowledge, if he did not learn to keep his temper. Mr Vernon was a man of admirable vivacity, but he was too choleric.'¹⁴ The prediction was fulfilled, and Vernon was killed on his later travels to Persia, in a stupid quarrel with the locals over a penknife.

Vernon was a member of the first group of travellers to visit Greece and Asia Minor specifically to study ancient Greek monuments. The two leading members were Dr Jacob Spon, a French physician with a passion for antiquities, and George Wheler, an Englishman who had toured Europe with

his Oxford tutor. They met in Rome in 1674, when Spon was 28 and Wheler 25. Wheler had recently inherited a large fortune and used it to pay for the expedition. They were briefly accompanied on the first part of their travels by Vernon and another English gentleman, Sir Giles Eastcourt, who also died abroad, succumbing to a sudden unidentified illness at Návpaktos in late 1675.

The party of four sailed from Venice in June 1675, stopping at Corfu, Kephalonía and Zákynthos, from where Vernon and Eastcourt set off independently for the Greek mainland. Spon and Wheler continued round the Peloponnese, visited several Aegean islands and the site of Troy, and reached Constantinople seven weeks later. There, thanks to the French ambassador the Marquis de Nointel who had himself travelled widely in Greece, they were both given French passports putting them under the protection of Louis XIV.

After three weeks in Constantinople Spon and Wheler went to Smyrna, from where they visited Ephesus and saw the famous theatre and the ruined Christian churches. In November 1675 they sailed from Smyrna to Crete, Zákynthos and then Pátras, continuing up the Gulf of Corinth via Delphi to Athens, which they reached in January 1676. From Athens they explored the surrounding region including the northern towns of the Peloponnese. In March 1676 they intended to travel north as far as Mt Athos, but found that the roads were blocked by snow. Spon left for home immediately and Wheler a month later. Each of them then devoted himself to writing an account of his travels.

What Spon and Wheler achieved was remarkable. In only a few months in Greece they had gathered the materials for the first systematic survey of Greek antiquities, in contrast to the haphazard findings of earlier visitors whom the chaplain John Covell derisively described as ‘Whiffers in those scraps of learning’.¹⁵

Spon and Wheler deserve the accolade of being the founders of serious modern Greek travel literature, a title one cannot grant to the blinkered and self-aggrandising William Lithgow, in spite of his book’s popularity. Though the main interest of both Spon and Wheler was in antiquities, they approached their subject from rather different perspectives. Wheler was a keen amateur botanist and took home 1,000 plant specimens from his travels, whereas Spon brought back 2,000 inscriptions. Wheler was also a devout Anglican, and had little sympathy for pre-Christian Greece. He thought that the interior of the Parthenon was dark – as it was before Morosini wrecked the roof – because ‘the Heathens loved obscurity’ so that their ceremonies ‘with all their juggling and cheating, were less exposed to view’. Spon was more open minded. His overriding interest, he admitted, was in antiquities, but he also took an interest in the contemporary Greeks, though he would not go out of his way to enquire about them: ‘I did not really neglect all the details [of ordinary life], when I was able to learn about them with ease and little cost.’¹⁶ Both Spon and Wheler, as we have seen in Chapter 9, described life in Athens, where they spent about a month, the longest stop they made in Greece.

Spon was a man for detail, and made precise measurements of the Parthenon and other buildings on the Akropolis, describing their setting and relating what he found to the ancient texts. His work was still praised as a guide by antiquarian visitors a century later. But Spon was fully appreciative of the beauty of what he saw, and wrote of the Parthenon: 'It was an impressive sight, and we stood for a long time in unwearying contemplation of the building's beauties. I wish my description of them might give you as much pleasure as the sight of them gave me.'¹⁷ Wheler expressed the same idea in almost identical words.

For both of them a constant theme was lament for the deterioration of the monuments. Some of this was due to human activity: ancient fragments were removed to make new buildings, and on the Akropolis the Turks had turned the Erechtheum into a harem, while the whole site was cluttered with huts housing the Turkish garrison. But much of the decline was due simply to the passage of time. Spon wrote of Delphi, which he had difficulty even finding, 'nothing remains now but wretched poverty and all its glory has passed like a dream.'¹⁸ The lengthy title of Wheler's book described the Greece he saw as 'A Lamentable Example of the Instability of human things'.¹⁹ Of Athens Spon wrote that 'time has completed the destruction of what war has spared.'²⁰

With lament for the deterioration of monuments went lament for the decline of the modern Greeks. In one view they were sunk in hopeless subjection. 'Athens is no longer more than a big poorhouse,' wrote Spon, 'which contains as many wretches as there are Christians under Turkish domination,' and in another passage, 'Greece suffers this servitude with as much silence and timidity as she in former times displayed intrepidity and courage in maintaining her liberty.'²¹

Perhaps all was not lost. Wheler commented on the Athenians' 'natural subtilty or wit', which he attributed to the climate, then commonly regarded as the main determinant of national character. Spon gave an account of how the Greeks got rid of a tyrannical governor by applying to Constantinople. But this was the limit of Greek freedom of action. The Greeks, said Wheler, were sensible of injuries committed by the Sultan's ministers, and would complain of them and pursue their rights, but he concluded that there was 'little hope of the Athenians ever gaining their liberty from the Turkish tyranny.'²² So the idea of Greek liberation was by now being tentatively expressed, but there was virtually no hope of it happening, ever.

Spon's account of his travels was published in 1678, and Spon sent a copy to Wheler, whose own version appeared four years later. Wheler dedicated his book to Charles II, and was knighted in reward. There is much in Wheler that follows Spon, and Wheler has been accused of simply copying him, particularly by French historians championing their compatriot. The rest of Sir George Wheler's life was comfortable. He took Holy Orders in 1685, founded a girls' school, fathered eighteen children and lived to the age of 73. Spon was

not so fortunate. His book was less successful than Wheler's. His passion for antiquities distracted him from his medical practice, and he became poor. In 1685 the Edict of Nantes, the act almost a century old granting freedom of worship to Protestants in France, was revoked, and Spon's Protestant family emigrated to Geneva. In the same year Spon set out to join them, but only reached Vevey, where on Christmas Day he died at the age of 38.

But there were many who, unlike Spon and Wheler, were interested in Greek antiquities not to study them but to remove them. This was often justified by the collectors as saving the monuments from further deterioration or from being broken up for use in new buildings. In the view of others this was simply looting. The argument has continued for two centuries over Elgin's removal to Britain of the Parthenon Marbles, which – a personal view – above all other Greek antiquities should be returned to Greece.

The English and the French, with their early diplomatic and trade links with the Ottoman Empire, competed to collect removable antiquities. For England Sir Thomas Roe, ambassador to Constantinople from 1621 to 1628, acted as collector for both the Duke of Buckingham, a favourite of Charles I, and for Thomas Howard, the Earl of Arundel. In 1624 Roe wrote to Buckingham that he had learned from the patriarch that Dhílos (Delos), 'a small, despised, uninhabited island', was not as yet broken up and that his agents 'may take without trouble or prohibition, whatsoever they please'.²³ Arundel's resourceful agent William Petty, acting with the help of Sir Thomas Roe, acquired what became known as the Arundel Marbles.

The most famous of these was the Parian Marble, a large fragment of a column originally some six feet high, which recorded various very ancient political, military and religious events between about 1580 and 355 BC. This had originally been found by an agent for a French collector, but when this agent was arrested in Smyrna and his collection confiscated William Petty acquired the Parian Marble and shipped it off to Arundel. Arundel's grandson presented it to the Ashmolean at Oxford where it remains, and in 1897 was joined by a second fragment. Other Arundel Marbles were scandalously neglected by later generations. A drum from an antique pillar was used as a lawn roller, and a fragment from a frieze, set in the wall of a cottage, was offered – but fortunately refused – to be broken up for cemetery chippings.

Probably the most destructive of the early English collectors was Sir Kenelm Digby, commissioned by the Duke of Buckingham in 1627 to sail the Mediterranean as a privateer. As well as doing much damage to Venetian shipping, Digby was keen to obtain antiquities for his patron by whatever means were necessary. At Dhílos, he recorded, his sailors 'mastered prodigious massy weights; but one stone, the greatest and fairest of all containing 4 statues, they gave over after they had been, 300 men, a whole day about it. But the next day I contrived a way with masts of ships and another ship to ride over against it, that brought it down with much ease and speed'.²⁴ There was destruction by the French too. In the 1720s the Catholic

cleric the Abbé Fourmont toured Greece in search of inscriptions, and to get them would smash any building thought to contain them: 'Every castle, every citadel, every old tower where I suspected there were inscriptions was overturned.'²⁵ Fourmont has been accused of going even further, and smashing the inscriptions themselves so that his records of them, some later found to be forgeries, could not be challenged.

The French were as keen as the English to acquire antiquities to be sent home, and one of the most active was the French ambassador to Constantinople throughout the 1670s, the Marquis de Nointel. Nointel's searches, for his own collection besides that of Louis XIV, took him to the Holy Land and Egypt as well as to the mainland and Aegean islands of Greece. He was interested not only in monuments and inscriptions but also in coins and particularly manuscripts. It was common practice to bribe monks and priests to part with ancient documents, or the bribe might be ostensibly a gift: Nointel presented the patriarch with the French version of the entire Byzantine historical corpus, not only as 'the means of making the liberality of His Majesty radiate' but also to help in obtaining manuscripts from Mt Athos.

Monuments, however, were Nointel's main concern when he visited Athens in 1674. His artist produced the only pictorial records of the Parthenon before Morosini's explosion. He regretted, over a century before Elgin, that he could not take away the Parthenon Marbles, to grace the collection of Louis XIV and to protect them from the abuses and affronts of the Turks. He was keenly appreciative of their beauty: 'If it were possible to express now the rich confusion that such a beautiful array of different passions has left in my mind, I would undertake it with pleasure.'²⁶ But Nointel's passion for antiquities, like Spon's, was his undoing. His purchases plunged him into debt and his neglect of diplomatic duties led to his recall in 1679. He never completed the account of his travels before his death in 1685.

Many of the activities of these early collectors of Greece's antiquities are shocking to the modern view. Archaeology was then an amateur pursuit, and it was not until the later nineteenth century that it became an activity for qualified professionals excavating and recording meticulously, though still sometimes with wildly imaginative reconstructions – such as those of Sir Arthur Evans at Knossos. However, there can be no doubt that if the antiquities that were removed had been left in place many would not have survived the deterioration and the careless destruction that the collectors so often witnessed. Who can say whether the combined activities of the collectors, both scrupulous and unscrupulous, preserved more of value than they destroyed?

One of the last travellers to visit Greece before the Orlov revolt of 1770 raised the prospect of Greek liberation was Richard Chandler, who was there in 1765–6. He was primarily interested in ancient monuments, and was a worthy successor to Spon and Wheler, whose work he readily acknowledged. Chandler, as revealed in his writings, is an engaging character. As one

historian puts it: 'In its organization and execution, and in the ensuing publications, Richard Chandler's journey through Asia Minor and Greece may be thought the classic of the age. His travels have a transparency and integrity all their own.'²⁷ So it is worth following Chandler's travels in some detail.

Chandler was sent out as agent of the Society of Dilettanti, founded in 1734 by a group of distinguished gentlemen. Their travels in Italy had made them 'desirous of encouraging at home a taste for those objects which had contributed so much to their entertainment abroad'.²⁸ But their interests were not confined to Italy, and in May 1764 the society appointed the young Chandler to lead an expedition to Asia Minor, based on Smyrna, a commission later extended to cover Greece as well. Chandler was told that his main task was to study the remains of antiquity in order to shed light on 'the ancient state of those countries', but 'it is by no means intended to confine you to that province; on the contrary, it is expected that you do report to us, for the information of the Society, whatever can fall within the notice of curious and observing travellers.'²⁹

Some three quarters of Chandler's account of his travels relate to his principal object, antiquities, which he examined with the ancient texts of Pausanias and Strabo constantly to hand. These sections can perhaps be skimmed except by archaeologists. But fortunately he did not neglect the second part of his instructions, and it is these observations that are the main interest for the rest of us.

Chandler was only 26 when he was appointed but was already an academic success. Educated at Winchester on a scholarship and at Queen's College, Oxford, he continued his studies at neighbouring Magdalen and became a fellow of that college at the age of 22. By the time of his commission from the Dilettanti he had already published two well-received books on antiquities. For his expedition he had two companions: Richard Revett to cover architecture and William Pars to produce watercolour pictures of ruins, leaving Chandler to deal with their history.

Chandler's party sailed from Gravesend in June 1764 and in September reached Smyrna. Until August of the following year this was their base for exploring Asia Minor, though Smyrna was much troubled by plague. This part of Chandler's travels gave only occasional opportunities to meet the Greeks. On the way to Smyrna the party stopped at Chíos, where Chandler enjoyed a Turkish bath and the accompanying vigorous massage, and noted that Orthodox and Catholics were still at odds: 'The old religious parties still subsist with unextinguished animosity, each sect cherishing insuperable hatred, and intriguing to ruin its adversary.'³⁰ He was also as susceptible as others had been to the beauty and elegance of the girls of Chíos, with their snow-white linen turbans, short petticoats and ornamental yellow slippers: 'The beautiful Greek girls are the most striking ornaments of Scio. Many of these were sitting at the doors and windows, twisting cotton or silk, or employed in spinning and needlework, and accosted us with familiarity,

bidding us welcome, as we passed, their whole appearance so fantastic and lively as to afford us much entertainment.’³¹

Later at Ephesus Chandler found that the only inhabitants were ‘a few Greek peasants, living in extreme wretchedness, dependence, and insensibility’,³² though he does not say how these Greeks came to be there. Despite being destitute they were a lively lot. Chandler employed some to shift stones, and when he moved off to another site ‘the whole tribe, ten or twelve, followed; one playing all the way before them on a rude lyre. After gratifying their curiosity, they returned back as they came, with their musician in front.’³³

In August 1765 Chandler and his party sailed from Smyrna with some relief: ‘We had reason to rejoice that our long stay on this continent was so near a conclusion.’³⁴ The crew was Greek, and Chandler was struck by the Greek sailors’ *joie de vivre*. At the port of Soúñion (Sunium), he says, ‘our sailors stripped to their drawers to bathe, all of them swimming and diving remarkably well; and some running about on the sharp rocks with naked feet, as if devoid of feeling; and some examining the bottom of the clear water for the echinus or sea-chestnut, a species of shellfish.’³⁵ At sea later, despite the ship’s roll, they held an impromptu dance. ‘One of the crew played on the violin, and one on the lyre. The captain, though a bulky man, excelled, with two of his boys, in dancing. They exerted an extraordinary degree of activity, and preserved their footing, for which a very small space on the deck sufficed, with wonderful dexterity, with feats, some ludicrous, and, to our apprehension, indecent.’³⁶

Chandler was also impressed by the sailors’ piety. In the poop was a niche holding a picture of the Virgin Mary, the Panayía, flanked by the image of another saint and of the crucifixion. When the ship was moored on Sunday to a rock on which was a ruined chapel of the Panayía, the sailors carried up to it incense and burning coals and performed, says Chandler, their customary devotions.

The party made a brief stop at Éyina and then sailed on to Athens, where they introduced themselves to the leading Turks – Ahmed Aga, described as the chief Turk of Athens, the governor (somebody different), the Akropolis commander and the mufti. They also met the leading Greeks – the Orthodox archbishop and the members of the town’s representative committee. ‘We were pleased with the civil behaviour of the people in general,’ wrote Chandler, ‘and enjoyed a tranquillity to which we had long been strangers.’³⁷

The town of Athens had changed little since the visitors of a century earlier had recorded their impressions. The houses were mean and straggling, the lanes lined by high whitewashed walls, the streets irregular. Corsairs were less of a threat, but there were still nightly Turkish patrols in case they attacked. There were now more Turks in Athens, some 300 families, but they were still a minority of the population. The number of public schools had grown from one to two, but one of these was starved of funds. Though most food was

plentiful and cheap, grain was not because the ban on exporting it was continually eluded, so that 'public distress bordering on famine ensues almost yearly.'³⁸

Chandler recorded his impression of the characteristics of the Turks, Greeks and Albanians of Athens and its surroundings. 'The Turks of Athens', he wrote, 'are in general more polite, social, and affable, than is common in that stately race, living on more equal terms with their fellow citizens.'³⁹ Chandler's picture of the Greeks is less straightforward. They are, he said, deservedly known as crafty, subtle and acute. On the other hand they are depressed by the memory of Turkish punishments such as the bastinado, and are terrified of the penalties of resistance. Yet they are continually involved in factions, intrigues and private animosities. The Christian Albanians, who were doing the farming and shepherding which the lordly Turk and the lively Greek neglected, were regarded more favourably: 'Inured early to fatigue and the sun, they are hardy and robust, of manly carriage, very different from that of the obsequious Greek, and of desperate bravery under every disadvantage.'⁴⁰

While in Athens Chandler received a letter from the Society of Dilettanti instructing him to return, if it seemed safe and practicable, through the Peloponnese and ultimately via Italy. So on 21 June 1766 Chandler and his party sailed from Piraeus in a felucca from Hydra, manned by seven men and two boys. Also on board were a cook and two servants, a janissary, a Pátras Greek, two Athenian youths, and a plausible adventurer from Corfu, just out of prison, on whom Chandler and his companions had taken pity, which 'he repaid with dishonesty and deceit.'⁴¹ They left an Albanian youth, who had travelled with them up to now, in tears on the shore.

They went first to the island of Póros off the north-east coast of the Peloponnese, from where they explored the ruins at Troezen, modern Trizína, on the adjacent mainland. Then they crossed the Corinth isthmus, noting the traces of early attempts to cut it with a canal, and continued along the north side of the Gulf of Corinth to Delphi. Next they went across to the south side at Vóstitsa, modern Éyio, and on to Pátras, from where they explored by boat the Mesolongi lagoons and the Echinádhēs islands, site of the battle of Lepanto two centuries earlier, though clearly an event not ancient enough for Chandler even to mention it. They then travelled south to Pírgos and Olympia, and finally returned to Pátras, where on 20 July 1766 they sailed for Zákynthos, having packed a great deal of travel and exploration into the month since leaving Athens.

Along the way Chandler often saw the Greeks at work. Harvesting had already begun, and near Delphi no animals could at first be spared for Chandler's transport, but next day the villagers obligingly, and no doubt expecting generous payment, appeared with a train of asses and mules and a peasant to guide them. There was virtually no wheeled transport: Chandler saw only one cart on this part of his journey. Threshing was done with horses, running abreast round a stake to tread out the grain. Most other tasks needed

human muscle. Chandler saw a man treading milk in a skin to make butter, and at Zákynthos the currants, after being compacted in a large press, were dug out with crowbars and stamped into casks by men with their legs and feet bare.

Fishing was a regular occupation. On an excursion from Athens Chandler found monks trapping eels. Off Mesolongi there was plentiful mullet, said to delight in foul and muddy water, their roes being used for a sort of caviar. Here small sheds on posts dotted the lagoon, 'designed for watchmen, who observe the finny squadrons, and, by closing the avenues of the fences, secure them in prison'.⁴² Near Salamis Chandler himself went out with night fishermen who used a common method. They first formed a trap with a wide circle of netting, then to attract the fish lit a fire of cedar wood dipped in oil, and sprinkled oil on the water to flatten it. 'At the same time we began to clatter with wooden hammers on the sides and seats of the wherries, to dash with a pole, and to throw stones, disturbing and driving the fish.'⁴³ The nets were drawn in, the fires thrown into the sea, and the boats moved off in darkness to the next fishing ground.

On their travels Chandler and his party were never short of provisions. On the slopes of Mt Hymettus near Athens they had a barbecue lunch. A friendly Turk supplied a sheep, which was killed, disembowelled and fixed still warm on a spit. The servants 'cut in pieces the heart, liver, and the like, and mingled them on a skewer, to be dressed on the coals. Some boughs of green mastic served us at once for table-cloth and dish. We fell to with knives or fingers, for the latter are principally used; and a Greek, kneeling by us, circulated wine, pouring it into a shell.'⁴⁴ In the countryside near Corinth the fare was simpler. Some goatherds 'treated us with new cheese, curdled with milk made sour, and with ordinary bread roasted on embers',⁴⁵ but also provided a fat kid from their flock for future consumption.

Where to spend the night was often more problematical. When travelling by boat the party would sleep among the bare rocks on the shore, perhaps sheltered by mastic bushes, or in a cave 'black with the smoke of fires kindled by travellers, or by mariners and fishermen'.⁴⁶ Sometimes they slept on board: 'our carpets and coverlets were spread on the poop of our bark, and the men lay on the deck.'⁴⁷

When on land they might sleep in a cottage. 'Our hotel was a cottage without a chimney. We were almost blinded with the smoke. At night the mud floor, on which we lay, was covered with men, women, and children; and under the same roof was the poultry, and livestock belonging to the family.'⁴⁸ Monasteries were more comfortable. At one near Soúinion they dined on boiled fowls, olives and cheese and then slept out in the open, 'some under a shed, some in the court, and one of my companions in a tree'.⁴⁹ At another monastery near Pírgos they were at first cold-shouldered because they were taken for Frenchmen, and therefore abhorred Catholics, but once the misunderstanding was cleared up they were well treated, to supper and an

apartment to sleep in. Some again preferred to sleep outside, but were disturbed by the poultry roosting in a nearby mulberry tree and by innumerable goats, and later discovered that a host of large fleas had settled in the folds of their clothes.

Chandler and his party were looked after and helped by virtually everyone they met, whether Greeks, Turks or Albanians. Chandler often had good words for the Albanians, though regularly describing them as savages. One night was spent in an Albanian woman's cottage: 'The house was neat though mean, and much recommended afterwards by the honest heartiness of its owner, her husband, and of his family.'⁵⁰ Rather different was the group of Muslim Albanians employed by the Turks to guard the roads. They were 'robust dirty savages', wrote Chandler, and 'were represented to us as drunken and quarrelsome, given to detestable vices, and as dangerous as the banditti, against whom they were employed'.⁵¹ But despite their reputation they invited Chandler and his party to dine with them and, when they nervously declined, pressed on them a portion of their roasted sheep.

In fact Chandler never met any banditti. This may have been thanks to the janissary who accompanied them, and Chandler had high praise for the janissary of their Asia Minor travels. It may also have been because this was a time of relative tranquillity in the Peloponnese: the upheavals caused by the Venetian occupation had ended with their expulsion in 1715, 50 years earlier, and the chaos of the Orlov revolt was still five years in the future.

Chandler's only real difficulties, apart from the deceitful Corfu adventurer who left Athens with them, were caused by the Italian servant Lombardi whom Chandler hired in Athens. His characteristics, said Chandler, were uncommon address and eloquence, which no doubt led Chandler to take him on, but also profligacy and hypocrisy, which should have led Chandler to sack him. He was a fugitive from justice in Italy, where he was said to have been a priest and robbed the church. He had ingratiated himself with the Turks, and had published what Chandler regarded as a lampoon on Christianity. He had successfully intrigued at Constantinople against leading Greeks. He had repudiated his Greek wife and her children because they would not give up Christianity, and married a young Albanian in a Muslim ceremony, 'but a plurality of wives ranked among the least criminal of his various enormities.'⁵² Nevertheless, despite this catalogue of Lombardi's iniquities and further instances of cheating and duplicity along the way, he stayed with them throughout their month of travel. When they finally sailed for Zákynthos they took leave of Lombardi, 'whose services we requited with a handsome gratuity in money, besides various presents, some of which he requested'.⁵³

By now the party was suffering from the effects of travel: stomach upsets from too much fruit, fatigue, the daytime sun, and dampness and vermin at night, apart from what was probably malaria from the foulness of the air, which was considered pestilential in those parts. On Zákynthos they had to spend a fortnight of quarantine in the lazaretto, where they were visited by a

doctor and well looked after by the prior of the lazaretto and the monks of the nearby Catholic monastery. They had a final lucky escape. They left Zákynthos on 1 September 1766 and sailed safely home in the brig *Diligence*. They had intended to travel in the *Sea Horse*, and changed plans only when it was delayed. The *Sea Horse*, when it eventually sailed, was lost off the Scilly Isles in the following December.

The picture of Richard Chandler that emerges is of a donnish, slightly prim, but essentially kind young man, willing to face the hazards and uncertainties of his journey but not to take needless risks. He seems always to have been ready to lift his eyes from his study of ruined monuments and to be diverted by what was around him and to relate to the people he met. He was disposed to trust everybody, even the villainous Lombardi – and was probably cheated no more often than those who live in a permanent state of wary suspicion.

While in Zákynthos Chandler retrospectively described the Greece he had visited as a country of misery and desolation, and the Greeks as humble and depressed. He had found poverty certainly, but a productive land rather than a desolate one, and his descriptions of the Greeks were of a people generally cheerful and energetic, not depressed. As with his regular description of Albanians as savages even though he often admired those he met, Chandler seems to have lurched between what he actually saw, and what the fashionable generalities told him he ought to see. A few years later came the Orlov revolt, and the fashionable generalities began to change.

1770 – The Orlov Revolt

From 1768 to 1774 Russia and Turkey were at war, in one of a series of conflicts between them that punctuated the eighteenth century. In 1770 a small Russian force, of nine ships and some 600 men led by Count Theodore Orlov, landed at the little harbour of Ítilo in the southern Peloponnese aiming to lead a revolt of the Greeks against their Turkish rulers.

The antagonism between Turkey and Russia went back a long way. A century earlier the Russian foreign minister had proclaimed three main long-term goals for the expanding state. The first was access in the north to the Baltic. This was achieved by Peter the Great at the expense of Sweden, enabling Peter to start building St Petersburg at the mouth of the Neva river in 1703. The second aim was to acquire land, to the west in Byelorussia, then Polish, and to the south in the southern part of the Ukraine, then Turkish. The third objective, involving even sharper conflict with the Turks, was to give Russia access to the Black Sea and ultimately to the Mediterranean.

For Russia the gateway to the Black Sea was the Turkish fortress at Azov in the north-east corner of the Sea of Azov, a huge expanse of water half as large again as Wales, and joined by a narrow channel to the Black Sea. Russian possession of Azov see-sawed: it was taken in 1696 by Peter the Great, lost in 1713, recaptured in 1735, and in 1739 retained by Russia but only on sufferance as an unfortified town. Russia's door to the Black Sea, and beyond it the Mediterranean, was ajar but still far from being fully opened.

In 1768 war broke out again between Russia and Turkey. Russia had been transformed since the time of Peter the Great. His immediate successors as Tsar or Tsarina had been largely ineffectual, and when his grandson became Tsar Peter III in 1761 the army deposed him within a few months of his accession and installed in his place his wife Catherine, to become known as Catherine the Great. Catherine sent her husband into internal exile in the custody of Alexis Orlov who, it is believed, was responsible for Peter's assassination soon afterwards, perhaps the first service performed by the Orlov family for the new sovereign.

Catherine moved swiftly to pursue Russia's long-term aims that had been proposed a century earlier. Access to the Baltic had been gained, but expansion to the west and the south had not. Catherine's first move was to extend Russian influence westward into Poland. Poland was then the size of

today's France, and its borders stretched 200 to 300 miles into today's Russian territory, to Smolensk in the north and to Kiev in the south. But Poland's government had long been chaotic, bedevilled by feuding nobles and hamstrung by the so-called *liberum veto*, by which any member of the parliament could delay business indefinitely. Poland's other neighbours, Prussia and Austria, were also looking to expand at her expense.

In 1764, two years after her accession, Catherine secured the election to the Polish throne of her former lover Stanislaw Poniatovski, with the backing of Russian troops. This was furiously resented by the Polish nobles, a group of whom formed a confederacy that in 1768 appealed to France and to the Ottomans for help against the Russians. France did nothing, but the Sultan, Mustafa III, issued an ultimatum to Russia to withdraw her troops from Poland, and when this was refused declared war.

On the face of it, this Turkish decision to go to war was an extraordinary one. Turkey had no immediate interests in Poland. Also she had previously rejected appeals for intervention from the Polish government, but now responded to an appeal from a dissident group of Polish nobles who lacked leadership and had no clear programme. Possibly the main reason for the Ottoman decision was the belief that this was an opportune moment to provoke a war with Russia. In 1768 the Ottoman Empire had been at peace on all its borders for over twenty years, the longest period of peace in its history. The war parties, ever present at the Sultan's court, were suffering from what might be called peace-weariness. Moreover the last conflict with the Russians had ended in 1739 with Russian defeats and treaty concessions. But the reality was that the Russian army and navy were more powerful than they had been 30 years earlier, while the Ottoman Empire as a whole was weak – as both the Sultan and his grand vizier recognised – due to the old problems of inflation, plagues, food shortages, unemployment, bandits and insubordinate factions. Moreover, Mehmed Emin Pasha, the grand vizier and commander-in-chief, was a military incompetent who, it is believed, advised against war with Russia. It was against this background that in 1768 Turkey launched what was arguably the most disastrous war in its history.

The Russian forces moved on three fronts against Ottoman territory round the Black Sea, towards the Caucasus in the east, towards the Crimea in the centre and towards the southern Ukraine in the west. In the first years of the war the Russians were overwhelmingly successful, especially in the western sector, where they captured the Dniester town of Khotin in 1769, and pushed across the river into the Ottoman principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia in today's Romania. In February 1770 they occupied Bucharest, the same month as the Russian force under Theodore Orlov landed in the Peloponnese.

Preparation for the Orlov revolt in Greece as part of a general insurrection against the Turks had begun many years before. It was proposed in 1762, immediately after Catherine came to the throne, by Georgios Papazólis, a Greek from Macedonia who was an officer in the Russian artillery. The idea

was enthusiastically taken up by the two Orlov brothers, Alexis and Theodore, who already knew Papazólis from his involvement with them in the brutal removal of Catherine's husband Peter III. Papazólis was given leave from the Russian army and in 1763 arrived in Venice to start establishing contacts and finding recruits for the task of raising the revolt.

Of the two Orlov brothers the older, Alexis, was described as uneducated, rough and lacking in personal courage. Theodore, who reached Greece before his brother, was considered more intelligent, more affable and an admirer of Greece who hoped to win glory for Russia there.¹ Unfortunately neither brother's qualities were sufficient for the situation in which they found themselves.

Originally the Orlov plan had been for a rising of all the Balkan subjects of the Turks, but Papazólis, a Greek himself, soon concentrated on the Greeks. He left Venice in 1766 and moved down through Greece, ultimately reaching the little harbour of Ítilo in the Mani, where the first Russian troops would later land. From there he travelled round the southern Peloponnese, disguised as a Turk with a Turkish pseudonym and speaking Turkish.

His promises to the Greeks and his reports of the support they would give to a revolt became wildly optimistic. He assured the Greeks that Turkish rule would be overthrown and the Byzantine Empire re-established. He reputedly claimed to his Russian masters that the Greeks of the Peloponnese would raise 100,000 fighting men, whereas according to one historian's estimate only 6,000 to 7,000 was the maximum possible.² Nor was Papazólis deterred by the caution of the Mavromichális brothers of the Mani, whom he saw as leading the revolt there. They pointed out that the clans of the Mani were riven by disagreements and that in any case the Mani fighters, though excellent in defence, were wholly unsuitable as an attacking force.

With the outbreak in 1768 of war between Russia and Turkey, the Orlov brothers and the Russian court became directly involved in the Greek venture. In the summer of that year Alexis and Theodore Orlov, both Russian officers, were given leave of absence, ostensibly on grounds of ill health. They went first as Papazólis had done to Venice, and made contact with prominent Greeks in the city through whom they raised loans to support the enterprise, since presumably they lacked enough funds from Russia. But the Venetians had no wish to antagonise Turkey and banned the recruitment of volunteers, so the Orlovs had to leave, first to Genoa and then to Livorno. In January 1769, while the Orlovs were still in Venice, Catherine appointed the older brother Alexis as commander of the Greek rising. In the same month Count Nikita Panin, Russia's First Minister, sent to Georgákis Mavromichális, one of the Mani leaders, a letter full of encouragement. Panin promised, on behalf of Catherine, that the Greeks would enjoy her 'total support, unsparing compassion, protection and championship' and assured them that they would be freed 'once and for all from the oppressive yoke of their unjust infidel enemies'.³

Three Russian fleets were intended to sail from the Baltic to the Aegean to support the Greeks, but only the first played any part in the rising. The second fleet arrived off the Peloponnese when the fighting was virtually over, and the third did not even sail from the Baltic until after the Russians had abandoned Greece.

The first fleet left Russia at the end of July 1769, but was struck by accumulating disasters. Many of the sailors were raw recruits from mainland Russia who had never seen the sea before; many of them fell ill and some died on the voyage. The ships were old and constantly damaged by storms, and had to stop in England for repairs. It was not until late January 1770 that the fleet, by now reduced from nineteen to nine ships, assembled at the Minorca harbour of Mahon. There Theodore Orlov joined them from Livorno and was keen to press on at once, so with a few ships he led the way and reached Ítilo in the Mani on 28 February, to be greeted by a whole day of celebratory Greek gunfire. On the next day the rest of the fleet arrived.

The euphoria that attended the arrival of the Russians did not last long. The number of Russian troops, 600 at the most, was far lower than the Greeks had expected. Only Theodore Orlov had arrived in Greece, while his brother Alexis, overall commander of the expedition, stayed in Livorno, where he was to remain for many weeks longer. The Greek fighters were required to take an oath of allegiance to Catherine, and were put under the command of Russian officers. The Greeks were also given Russian uniforms to wear, and however galling this was to the Greeks it was initially effective. The Turks of the Mani fled at the sight of them with a cry of ‘They’re not Greeks, they’re Russians,’ but only a few weeks later the Turks besieged in Pátras spotted the deception and said scathingly ‘Show us one real Russian and we’ll open the gates.’⁴

Despite their disagreements the Russians and the Greeks had some early successes. Two legions were formed, both with Greek captains but under the command of a Russian officer. The Eastern Legion, formed of 1,200 Greeks and 20 Russians, moved to besiege Mistrás, which contained few Turkish troops but a large number of non-combatant local Turks. The siege began at dawn on 10 March 1770 and the town’s outnumbered defenders surrendered nine days later. An appalling orgy of slaughter followed, much of it due to the uncontrolled bands from the Mani who followed the legion in the hope of plunder, and would fire on Russian troops in pursuit of it. The metropolitan bishop, in full episcopal robes and accompanied by his clergy, went out in an attempt to control the Mani bands, and the Russian commander tried to restrain them, sending Turks to Christian households for protection, but soon gave up. Probably 1,000 Turks were killed and another 1,000 taken captive, while many more fled. This episode worked against future Russian and Greek successes, since any Turkish garrison would resist to the last to avoid such a fate. Also the success at Mistrás was not followed up: eighteen days were lost in plundering and making dilatory repairs to the town’s defensive walls.

Only one significant development followed the fall of Mistrás: a provisional

Greek government was set up, under the leading Greek captain of the Eastern Legion, Antónios Psarós. Its two main aims were first to recruit more Greeks to the cause, in which it was successful to the tune of some 8,000 men, and second to control them, which it was wholly unable to do. But short-lived and ineffective as this provisional government was, it was the first recognition by the Greeks that the overthrow of Turkish rule would require a political structure as well as battlefield success, something well understood by the Greeks of the war of independence.

The other legion, the Western, was smaller, composed of 200 Greeks and 12 Russians. Its main task was to join the Russian ships in besieging Koróni. This fortress is on a commanding rocky height at the far south-western tip of the Peloponnese, and the Russians saw the harbour below it as a suitable base for their fleet. This Western Legion left Ítilo on 9 March, and in the course of their march to Koróni drove the Turks from the towns of Andhrousa and Leondári, killing, it was said, Greeks as well as Turks in the process. By 12 March both the Russian fleet and the Western Legion were in position under the walls of Koróni and the siege began, personally commanded by Theodore Orlov.

However, all attempts by the attackers failed. Bombardment from the ships was ineffective, a mine intended to bring down part of the wall was put out of action by a Turkish counter-mine, and the Turks refused a demand to surrender. The Russians were already coming to see that Navarino, with its fine harbour in an enclosed bay, would be a better base for their fleet than Koróni, but the Mani troops insisted that the fortress could still be taken. So the Russian and Greek forces remained for six weeks under the walls of Koróni, achieving nothing.

The Koróni siege was a failure but the Orlov venture in its first weeks was successful elsewhere. The Eastern Legion had taken Mistrás, Greeks rose in revolt in Corinth, besieged Navplion, shut up the Turks in the citadel at Monemvasía and took Kiparissía in three days with the slaughter of 1,000 Turks. Volunteers from the Ionian islands were brought into the north-west Peloponnese on Russian transports, 2,000 from Zákinthos and 3,000 from Kephalonía, in defiance of their Venetian masters. They drove the Turks from Gastóuni and besieged Pátras, though with no more success than at Koróni. Further north there were risings in the towns around Mesolongi and Návpaktos, and in distant Crete there was a sympathetic revolt in the always lawless region of Sphakiá.

At the beginning of April Theodore Orlov sent to Catherine an exaggerated report of his victories. He gave little credit to the Greeks, saying that they were deceitful flatterers, reckless but cowardly, interested only in plunder and with no trace of Christian virtue. But he claimed that apart from Tripolis, Corinth and Pátras he was master of the whole Peloponnese and only needed more Russian troops to complete his conquest.

Now, however, the tide turned. The Turks had been completely unprepared

for the rising, and could not believe that Russian warships would sail all the way from the Baltic to the eastern Mediterranean. Their own troops were fully engaged against the Russians on other fronts, so their solution was to bring in Albanian mercenaries. In early April 1770 one Albanian band crossed the Corinth isthmus and relieved the siege of Corinth, and another, of 500 foot soldiers and 500 cavalry, crossed the narrow channel near Mesolongi and drove off the besiegers of Pátras. From there they moved on to reinforce the garrison of Tripolis, which was now under siege by the Russians and Greeks of the Eastern Legion who were ranged on the hills overlooking the town.

The Turks and Albanians of Tripolis were not content to defend but attacked, and at the first onslaught the Greeks threw away their weapons and fled. They had come for plunder, even bringing sacks in which to carry it away; now they were cut down by the pursuing horsemen. Though the Russians stood firm they were soon overwhelmed. The Albanians then turned on the Greek inhabitants of Tripolis. The metropolitan bishop and five of his clergy met a horrible death by impalement, and it is claimed that within a few hours around 3,000 Greeks were slaughtered.

Before the Albanians could reach the far south of the Peloponnese the Russians achieved one last military success: the capture of Navarino, which had become the preferred base for their fleet. A few days later, on 22 April 1770, Alexis Orlov, the commander-in-chief of the expedition, finally reached the Peloponnese, nearly eight weeks after the arrival of his younger brother Theodore and the first Russian troops. Alexis immediately ordered the fruitless siege of Koróni to be abandoned, leaving the local Greeks to the revenge of the Turks. For most of the Greeks of Koróni the only escape was to make the twenty-mile journey to the protection of Navarino, on foot and carrying their belongings with them.

Alexis' first priority was to win back the support of the Greeks after the catastrophe at Tripolis and the ignominious withdrawal from Koróni. Accordingly he sent letters to the leading Greek captains, urging cooperation and promising rewards for victory from Catherine's abundant treasury. He also issued a general appeal to the Greeks at a symbolic ceremony in Navarino celebrating the conversion of a Turkish mosque to a Christian church. The appeal spoke to the Greeks as if they were a united body, which was far from the case, and was framed in religious terms, being addressed to 'all orthodox Christian Greeks who are subject to the tyranny of the Turks', and proclaiming that 'all the world knows how our fellow Christians are tormented by the infidel Turks.' It claimed that the Russians in the present war had annihilated 600,000 Turks. It also promised that the Russians would do everything necessary to support the Greeks, and that Catherine wished the Greeks 'to remain always under her care and protection'.⁵ This last statement may have been counterproductive, reviving fears that liberation from the Turks might lead only to subservience to Russia.

But it was too late now to make up for the mistakes already made: the

dilatoriness in pressing home advantages, the waste of time on fruitless ventures, the lack of coordination of the Russian efforts, the delayed arrival of the overall Russian commander Alexis Orlov and the failure to develop the Greeks into a fighting force. Alexis Orlov attempted one last initiative, the capture of Methóni, the massive fortress a few miles south of Navarino, but on 28 May, after an eighteen-day siege, this too ended in disaster, with 150 Russians killed and 200, including Theodore Orlov, wounded. As the Turks and Albanians moved south to reimpose control, the Mani bands put up a brave resistance in several fierce battles, but the dream of liberating Greece from the Turks was by now over.

At this point Alexis Orlov took the decision to pull out of Greece, abandoning the last Russian foothold at Navarino. Only days before the Methóni disaster the second Russian fleet had at last arrived and was stationed off Navplion, but Alexis was not prepared to wait for possible Russian success in a possible naval battle. Greeks from far afield flocked to Navarino, fearing Turkish retribution and hoping for asylum and possibly escape on Russian ships. But Alexis soon closed the town gates against the flood of refugees, who shouted angrily ‘You promised us freedom, but all we ask is shelter.’⁶ Many got across to Sphaktiría, the barren waterless island in Navarino bay, where it is said that four to five thousand gathered.

On 6 June the Russians left, setting fire to the town as they went. They did take with them some hundreds of Greeks, including a number of the military leaders and six of the archbishops. But they left behind them the town of Navarino in flames and a crowd of Greeks on the shore, desperate for an escape that there were now no ships to provide. It was a disaster for which the Russians blamed the Greeks. In a scathing denunciation of them, Catherine wrote to Alexis Orlov: ‘Since the Greeks followed so poorly the Russian example of courage, and from their own cowardice, disloyalty and deceit showed no willingness to free themselves from their yoke, you were wholly sensible and right to leave them to their fate.’⁷ The Greeks for their part felt betrayed by the Russians. As a contemporary ballad put it,

The Russian came and lit for us a flame on every mountain,
But only to extinguish it in blood and lamentation.⁸

For the Greeks of the Peloponnese, the fate to which Alexis Orlov left them was indeed a terrible one – though not primarily at the hands of the Turks. Within days of the Russian departure the Turkish governor in Tripolis issued a general amnesty: ‘Any of you that throw yourself on the mercy and benevolence of our great Sultan, and proclaim your submission, shall receive pardon. If you do that, you shall be free.’⁹ It was the Albanian mercenaries who brought devastation to the Peloponnese for the next nine years. They claimed, perhaps with justification, that they were not being paid and therefore had to plunder instead, and it was believed that the Turks had agreed to this pernicious substitution.

From their base in Tripolis the Albanians spread out to pillage virtually the whole Peloponnese. As one chronicle recorded, ‘The Albanians came not as men but like a wild beast or a fire or a river, and the mind of man cannot calculate the amount of bloodshed and enslavement which they inflicted on the wretched Christians of the Morea.’¹⁰ Enslavement was indeed on a massive scale, the ban on enslaving subjects of the Sultan seemingly ignored, and by one reckoning 20,000 Greeks were seized in the nine years of Albanian devastation, to be sold as slaves in the Algerian markets or to Turks elsewhere in Greece. Many Greeks of the Peloponnese fled, to the Ionian islands, to Italy and elsewhere in Europe, and to Russia, especially the Crimea and the newly established town of Odessa, where they received some help from Catherine’s government. It is estimated that some 50,000 Greeks of the Peloponnese left for good, about a sixth of the pre-revolt population.

The Albanian reign of terror brought about some unlikely alignments. The Turkish commander of Koróni hired one band of Albanians to fight off their fellow countrymen. The richest Turk in Corinth recruited and armed Greek klephts to resist the Albanians who were threatening to burn down his property; the leader of these klephts was Konstantínos Kolokotrónis, whose son Theódhoros was to play a leading part in the war of independence.

Eventually the Turkish government moved decisively to restore order in the Peloponnese. In 1779 the kapitan pasha, head of the Turkish navy, sailed from Constantinople and landed with 2,000 men near Corinth. He immediately set about securing the cooperation of the Greeks against the Albanians and his instructions to the Greeks were brutally clear: ‘We order you to kill these Albanian blackguards (*zorbádhes*) without fear. All their possessions are yours. Just bring us their heads. Whatever you do is condoned. Give no quarter.’¹¹ He even issued Turkish uniforms to the Greeks. The final showdown came in July 1779 at the Albanians’ base of Tripolis, where they were surrounded and cut down as they tried to escape. At the eastern gate of Tripolis a pyramid of Albanian heads was set up, held together by mortar, and it was still there 30 years later, an enduring monument to a dreadful decade.

There remained a final task for the kapitan pasha in restoring Turkish control of the Peloponnese. Not all the Greek klephts had agreed to cooperate with the Turks, and foremost among the dissidents was Konstantínos Kolokótrónis. He was ready, as we have seen, to enter the service of an individual Turk, but to throw in his lot with the Turkish governing power was a different matter. His stance was widely approved by the Greeks: as a popular song had it,

The sun shines on the mountainside, it shines upon the valleys,
So shines the noble klephtic band that’s led by Kolokotrónis.¹²

A year later Kolokotrónis and his companions paid the price for their intransigence, in much the same way as the Albanians had done, being besieged in the village of Kastanítsa some 25 miles south of Navplion, and

killed as they fled. Among the dead was Kolokotrónis.

The Orlov revolt and its aftermath can be seen as an unmitigated disaster for the Greeks. The Russians had embarked on a massive enterprise without questioning wildly optimistic forecasts of support, with no clear strategy, without providing enough resources and without coordinating those that they did provide. The Greeks had joined them only so far as cooperation might serve their immediate interests. The result was the devastation of much of the Peloponnese and the deaths totalling tens of thousands of Russians, Greeks, Turks and Albanians. So did any good come of it at last?

One outcome was an improvement of the lot of the Greeks under the restored Turkish rule. The Turks adhered to their amnesty and there was no retribution on the Greeks for their support of the Russians. The Turkish government was more concerned to make the Peloponnese once again a peaceful productive tax-paying province. In 1776 the Mani, which had been the area most active in the Orlov revolt, was granted semi-autonomy under a Greek bey of the Mani. New land was brought under cultivation, trade developed, and the following decades have been characterised as the golden age of the Mani. Greeks in the rest of the Peloponnese were granted increased rights to make representations to the Turkish governor of the province, and even directly to Constantinople.

But perhaps the main benefit for the Greeks from the Orlov revolt lay in the lessons learned, albeit painfully, which would have results in the war of independence. One was that foreign intervention came at a price, for instance the required oath of allegiance to Catherine the Great. For success in their war of independence there were other prices to be paid to foreign powers, and for long resented: foreign influence on Greek affairs, and decades of crippling Greek indebtedness for their wartime loans.

A second lesson was, as we have seen, the need for a Greece fighting for independence to establish a government. Essential to this would be the so-called westerners, Greeks with experience of the politics of other European countries. In 1821 local forms of government were set up wherever the revolt broke out, and within a year there was a national government appointed by representatives from all over Greece. It was clearly named as a provisional government, underwent many changes and faced many vicissitudes, some of its own making. But it did provide a degree of control over the often unruly military captains, and a focus for the Greeks as a nation.

That perhaps was the major difference between 1770 and the war of independence: by 1821 the aspirations had become national. When Alexis Orlov addressed the Greeks on arrival in the Peloponnese in 1770 he spoke as if they had a common aim; in fact they cared only about their own people in their own locality. The word *patrídha* still meant 'home town' or 'birthplace'. The change in meaning to 'fatherland', and hence to the idea of a nation and its rights, was part of the ferment of ideas that swept the world in the late eighteenth century, loosely characterised as the Enlightenment.

Finally, the Orlov revolt showed Greece to Europe, and particularly to France and England, in a new light. Before the revolt began there were high hopes of its success. At the end of 1769 the writer of England's *The Annual Register* maintained that the long preceding period of peace had enfeebled the Turkish military, that the Greeks were numerous, fierce and warlike, and that with their support Russia would be 'the restorer of the Greek empire'.¹³ By the end of the following year the events of the revolt had dashed these hopes. The *Gentleman's Magazine*, summarising the events of 1770, said: 'On the first appearance of the Russian succours, the Greeks assumed for a moment the appearance of the manly bravery of their renowned ancestors; but their first attacks discovered the womanly spirit by which they were inspired: they fell furiously on all the Turks they could master, and massacred without distinction; their boasted victories were the frantic exploits of enraged madness.' On the Greeks' first sight of the enemy, it went on, 'in a moment their courage failed them.'¹⁴ And *The Annual Register* for 1770 declared that it would be absurd to think that the Greeks, 'a people immersed in a corruption of two thousand years, broken by long slavery, and sunk thro' every state of degradation, and whose imaginary bravery only depended upon their having never seen the face of an enemy, should all at once do more than inherit the valour of their ancestors'.¹⁵

The valour of the Greeks' ancestors and the contrast with contemporary Greeks became an increasingly dominant theme. In 1776, some years after the revolt had run its course, the young Choiseul-Gouffier, later to be French ambassador to Constantinople, travelled in the Peloponnese. Choiseul-Gouffier was saddened by the contrast between the Greeks of his day and their ancestors: 'These slaves were not merely ordinary mortals, they were the descendants of the ancient Greeks, and my respect for their name intensified my sense of their debasement.'¹⁶

But he saw signs of hope. The inhabitants of Tinos were patriotic and independent, the people of the Mani were, like the ancient Spartans, warlike and freedom loving. He thought it was the duty of Europe to intervene and help the Greeks. Choiseul-Gouffier's message was summarised in the frontispiece and accompanying caption of his account of his journey. Greece is shown as a woman in chains, surrounded by monuments to Leonidas, Epaminondas, Demosthenes and other great names from the past. The caption concludes with the words that are carved on the rock that towers above enslaved Greece: 'Exoriare aliquis . . .'. Choiseul-Gouffier's readers would have known their *Aeneid* and would not have needed the complete quotation: 'Exoriare aliquis nostris ex ossibus ultor' – 'Let an avenger arise from our dead bones.'¹⁷ The context was not altogether appropriate – the words are from Dido's castigation of Aeneas after he has deserted her – but the sentiment is completely clear.

The process was taken a step further by the French merchant Pierre-Augustin Guys. Based in Constantinople, he made many visits to Greece from

1744 onwards, and his close association with Greece continued until his death on Zákynthos in 1796. His *Voyage Littéraire de la Grèce* was first published in 1771, and in its final revised form in 1783.

Guys too compared the Greeks of his day with their ancestors, but not to denigrate the contemporary Greeks. In his view there was an unbroken continuity between the ancients and the moderns. Their potential for achievement was the same: 'I see', he declared, 'natural scenes and living models that can still inspire talent successfully. I see the most regular forms, black, bright eyes animated with a natural fire, elegant and majestic physiques, a simple and light dress.' Their faults too were the same: 'I found the Greeks just as their Historians, especially Thucydides, characterized them: dissembling, vain, supple, volatile, avid for gain, enthusiasts of novelty, unscrupulous on their oaths.'¹⁸ In Guys' view this continuity was expressed through folk traditions, the persistence of the Greek language and the religious festivals that replicated the rites of the ancient gods. It was these, thought Guys, which should be studied, rather than antique monuments. Guys had an apt simile for his different approach: 'Look at me as an Antiquarian, who instead of neglecting a copper coin, as so many other travellers have done, because it is unpolished and badly preserved, takes the trouble to wash it, to clean it carefully, and finally discovers the characters that were believed to be entirely effaced.'¹⁹

Guys' work was one of the first to give a favourable account of the Greeks and to express confidence in their future. The Greeks of today, he wrote, are the men of all time, and his son, congratulating him on his book, wrote 'The Greeks in your scenes are no longer in chains.'²⁰

Greeks Abroad

In the later years of Turkish rule in Greece it was mainly trade, by land or sea that took Greeks abroad. But in the earlier period there were many other reasons for Greeks to leave home, temporarily or permanently.

The earliest reason, as the Turks advanced through Byzantine territory, was simply flight. When Thessalonika was taken by the Turks in 1430 many of the Greek inhabitants fled to Venetian colonies, and there was an even greater and wider exodus when Constantinople fell in 1453. The consequent loss of Constantinople's population, combined with losses during the siege, meant that Mehmed the Conqueror had to take drastic measures, combining compulsion with inducements, to repopulate Constantinople from other Turkish controlled regions. More Greek emigrations followed later Turkish conquests – of the Peloponnese in 1461, Trebizond on the Black Sea in 1461, Évia in 1470, and in the following century Rhodes in 1522 and Cyprus in 1571.

Greek refugees began to appear all over western Europe. In the years immediately after the fall of Constantinople they were listed in the town records of central France (Nevers), northern France (Amiens, Abbeville) and many towns in today's Belgium such as Brussels, Bruges and Tournai. Greeks were also recorded in Germany and Spain, in England – especially London – and in Scotland. The records are particularly comprehensive for London and other parts of England because in 1440 the English government brought in a tax on alien residents that was known as the Alien Subsidy – a subsidy from the aliens rather than to them. The lists of those liable to the tax contain many who were certainly Greek and others who – the spelling of names, especially foreign ones, then being haphazard – were probably Greek.

However the main destination for Greek emigrants after the disaster of 1453 was the nearest point, Italy, for which the Adriatic port of Ragusa, modern Dubrovnik, was often the embarkation point. Venice was particularly welcoming. She had held parts of Greek territory, including Crete, since the Fourth Crusade of 1204. There were already many Greeks in Venice, and as early as 1271 they had been officially allowed to live there. In 1470 the Greeks in Venice were given permission to use a wing of the Church of San Biagio for their services, and in 1514 to build their own church, which was finally completed 60 years later as San Giorgio dei Greci. By the late fifteenth

century there were around 4,000 Greeks in Venice, and a century later even more, perhaps as many as 15,000.

Some Greeks left home only temporarily, with the specific purpose of raising money from fellow Christians to ransom members of their family who were being held captive by the Turks. One particularly energetic collector was Nikólaos Tarchanióitis, trying to ransom his parents, and between 1455 and 1459 he visited Milan, Lille, Brussels, Paris and other places in Italy and France on this mission. Nothing is known of him after 1459, so it seems that he raised the ransom money and that he returned to Constantinople.

Some Greeks got help in raising money through the system of ecclesiastical indulgences, which gave exemption from penances for confessed sins. A senior cleric would provide a letter granting such exemption to those who gave money or bequeathed it to one or more named Greek petitioners. The amount to be given ('*aliquod subsidium quod conscientia eorum dictaverit*'¹) was not specified; presumably it was up to the bearer of the letter to decide if it was enough. But the period of exemption was spelled out, and depended upon the seniority of the writer of the letter: 40 days from Archbishop Booth of York, a full year from Pope Pius II.

Many Greeks, however, settled permanently abroad, and needed some means of supporting themselves. For some, inherited wealth and aristocratic birth was enough. One such was Anna Notarás, daughter of Loukás Notarás, the commander-in-chief of the Byzantine forces defending Constantinople in 1453. She went to Venice shortly before Constantinople fell, was joined later by her brother Isaac, and lived in Venice until her death in 1507, reputedly at the age of over 100. She was rich enough to maintain other distinguished Greek exiles in her household, and to provide employment as servants for the less distinguished. Both categories were also helped by Cardinal Vissaríon in Rome. Vissaríon had been the leading Byzantine advocate of the union of the Catholic and Orthodox churches at the 1439 Council of Florence, after which he converted to Catholicism, became a cardinal and was twice considered for the papacy. He was a tireless rescuer of manuscripts of ancient Greek texts, and at his death left his entire library to Venice, seeing it as the most stable of the Italian states.

Other Greek exiles needed a skill to give them a livelihood. Some drew on their knowledge of the Greek language as teachers or copiers of manuscripts. Some were musicians – for example, Greek trumpeters at Ragusa, and a Greek in France skilled on the lute and harp. An unusual skill was in the drawing of gold wire, and Greek gold wire drawers were recorded in London and France, and in Venice where in the early 1500s they formed one of the wealthiest sections of the Greek community. They prospered because the process had been developed in Byzantium but was little known in western Europe. It involved pulling gold rods through a diminishing series of funnel-shaped holes, each transmission reducing the thickness but increasing the tensile strength because the constituents of the metal were compressed. The

resulting gold thread might either be used on its own or be wound round silk or other fibre. But the Greek gold wire drawers aroused local opposition and an enactment of 1463 in London barred alien practitioners from having shops in the city. Copying the procedure required little beyond some simple instruments and brute strength, so the skill passed from Greek emigrants to locals and this initial source of Greek prosperity did not last.

A skill less easily copied and so more reliable was the practice of medicine. The Greeks were far from being the only doctors practising in the countries of Europe, but their Byzantine background gave them two significant advantages. They could read the works of the ancient medical writers such as Hippocrates and Galen, and the summaries of these writings first compiled in the tenth century. Greek medical practice was therefore based on texts instead of oral tradition. Furthermore the standard of medicine as actually practised in the monastic and public hospitals of Constantinople was particularly high. Only in Italy, especially Venice and its dependencies, was comparable skill and practice to be found.

Perhaps the most remarkable career, in medicine and in other fields, was that of Thomas Frank, who was referred to as Thomas Frank, Master of Medicine or Magister Thomas, Physycian. He was a Greek from the Venetian possession of Koróni in the south-west Peloponnese, hence also the names Magister Thomas Greke and Thomas Coronaeus or de Coron. He was in London by 1436, when he applied for denizenship, that is permission for a foreigner to reside in the country with the rights of a citizen. Fortunately for Thomas a member of the council that heard and granted his application was Cardinal Henry Beaufort, bishop of Winchester. Beaufort became Thomas' patron, and Thomas became Beaufort's physician.

Thomas stayed in London, and his name appeared regularly on the Alien Subsidy lists from 1440, when they started, until 1447. He lived in the Broadstreet ward, which was also where the Italians of London tended to settle. Thomas was doctor to a prominent Genoan, had commercial dealings with one wealthy Venetian and was executor of the will of another. In 1440 another opportunity to prosper came his way: he was appointed rector of the wealthy parish of Brightwell in Berkshire, an office that was in the gift of his patron Cardinal Beaufort.

Thomas was an absentee rector, simply drawing the rector's income, and he appointed a curate to do the work. This was common practice at the time. What was somewhat unusual was that Thomas had not been ordained a priest, but Beaufort got permission from the Pope for Thomas to delay ordination, in effect indefinitely. However in 1447 Beaufort died and Thomas left England, though still apparently drawing the benefits of being rector of Brightwell. The Brightwell saga continued. Thomas' curate also died, and the Pope ordered an inquiry because divine worship there was much diminished, the church was in ruins, and the cure of souls was not being exercised. This was an opportunity for the bishop of Salisbury, whose diocese included Brightwell, to claim the

right to appoint Brightwell's rector, taking this right away from the bishop of Winchester in whose gift it traditionally was. Winchester, whose then bishop, William Waynflete, later became Lord Chancellor of England, won the day.

Meanwhile Thomas had gone to France, and by 1451 was physician to the French King, Charles VII. He became a significant figure at the French court and in 1456 the Milanese ambassador reported to the Duke of Milan that 'Master Thomas the Greek has as much influence with the king and the whole court as you have with me.'² In 1456 Thomas died of a stroke, and after his death the King was reported as being most pleased with what Thomas had done. Thus this exceptional man achieved a successful career in two foreign countries and in three different fields, as doctor, cleric at least nominally, and as courtier-diplomat, helped by what today would be called networking.

From around 1600 these early Greek emigrants were followed by others who were mainly traders. Overland the principal routes to the northern Balkans and beyond started from Thessalonika and diverged at Sofia, one road heading roughly westward to Belgrade, one northward to Budapest and Vienna, and one eastward to towns in today's Romania. Consequently many of these adventurous merchants came from towns close to the northern border of today's Greece – Iánnina, Kastoriá, Kozáni – or just beyond it, such as Koritsá (modern Korça) or Moschópolis (modern Pogradec).

The earliest official recognition of an expatriate Greek merchant community was in the Romanian towns of Sibiu and Brasov. In 1636, when the area was still nominally part of the Ottoman Empire, the semi-autonomous ruler of Transylvania, Rakoczi I, gave permission for the Greeks to form a corporate association. In 1678, by which time the area was an Austrian possession, a similar association was formed at Brasov, and the two were later combined.

These associations were officially open to any foreigner – Bulgarians, Serbs and Jews as well as Greeks – but Greeks quickly came to dominate them. The first Sibiu body of 1636 had 24 members, of whom 17 were Greeks, and 30 years later almost all were Greeks. The association was governed by an elected council of twelve. In a ruling ahead of its time women could belong to the association, though they could not become members of the council or vote for them. The association was limited to wholesale trade, so no retailing and no shops were allowed. The association collected state taxes from its members and in return its activities were protected. The behaviour of members was regulated. An association code of conduct of 1704 states that to avoid antagonising their hosts they must show respect to all government officials and the local population. They must also be polite to the association's council members, and not, says the code, use expressions such as 'Why are you ordering me about?' or 'Why should I?'³ The association was therefore a combination of a guild with restrictions on trade, a corporate body with privileges, a tax collector and a foreign group with particular obligations.



The Greek merchants of Sibiu and Brasov handled a wide range of products imported from all over the eastern Mediterranean region. Textiles were prominent, either the raw materials (wool, cotton, silk), cloth (calico, damask)

or finished garments (dresses, shawls, waterproof clothing). They also dealt in natural products (lemons, figs, rice, tobacco, and indigo for dyeing) and spices (pepper and nutmeg).

The other main concentrations of Greek expatriates were on the routes west or north via Belgrade and neighbouring Zemun on the Sava where it joins the Danube, and beyond Belgrade in Budapest and Vienna. In Zemun, besides merchants, there were Greeks practising crafts or trades as goldsmiths, silversmiths, furriers, bakers and shoemakers. One Greek set up a silk factory, another a brewery, and the Greeks were regarded as excellent innkeepers and restaurateurs. A mark of Greek involvement in the life of Zemun on the Sava was the election in 1803 of a Greek as mayor of the town.

In Budapest Greeks had been visitors since the early 1600s, bringing farm produce and homemade clothes to the local fairs. Later they prospered as merchants, and used the capital they accumulated first to rent farms and buildings and later to buy them. But it was in Vienna that Greek prosperity and influence was most marked. From trading the Greeks moved into banking, providing funds for many major enterprises. They became so prominent as financiers that the Greek association of merchants and bankers had to issue a denial that they were in business to charge interest: 'We are here to practise trade, not usury.'⁴ The leading Greek banker in Vienna was Símonas Sínas, merchant, owner of 30 villages in Austria and many buildings in Vienna and Budapest. He was one of the main contributors to the building of the Greek church in Vienna in 1803, was ennobled as baron by the Austrians, and his son Georgios provided five million florins for the construction of the suspension bridge over the Danube linking Buda with Pest.

In the towns where Greek expatriates gathered they needed three things to establish themselves as a community: their own church, school and newspaper. In Zemun the Greek Orthodox initially shared a church with the Serbian Orthodox, and disputes soon arose over whether services should be conducted in Greek or Serbian. At the end of the eighteenth century a compromise was reached: the language should be Greek on alternate Sundays and on important church festivals – Easter, Áyios Dhímítrios in October and the day after Christmas – but otherwise Serbian. The arrangement lasted until the early twentieth century, when Serbian finally ousted Greek.

In Budapest too Greeks and Serbians initially shared a church with alternating languages, but in 1790 the Greeks built their own church, funded by Greek merchants and decorated by Greek craftsmen. In Budapest there were also Vlachs from north-west Greece who spoke their own language, based on Latin and linked to Romanian, and on certain days the services were conducted by a Vlach priest in the Vlach language.

In Vienna the Greeks worshipped from 1726 onwards in a side chapel of the church of Áyios Georgios, but 50 years later, after disputes with the Serbs, the church was allocated exclusively to the Greeks. It seems that Greek and Serbian Orthodox continued to be at odds since in 1803 the Greeks built their

own church, with major contributions as we have seen from Símonos Sínas.

Over schools too there was sometimes conflict between the Greeks and their hosts. In Sibiu and Brasov the German-speaking locals opposed the founding of Greek schools, which they saw as strengthening the Greek community to the detriment of their own. However in 1797 a Greek school was established in Brasov with a curriculum combining the patriotic with the practical: not only Greek language, history and religion, but also German, accountancy and business correspondence.

In Belgrade there was a Greek school from as early as 1718, and much later in 1842 a school specifically to teach business skills. The school in nearby Zemun, the *Ellinomousío* established in 1794, was reputed to be better than the one in Belgrade. Serbian children also studied there, and textbooks were translated from Greek to Serbian for their benefit. In Budapest the school was inaugurated by the Greek Orthodox bishop of Buda in 1812. It had a particularly good library, and students could also benefit from the two Greek bookshops in the city. In Vienna there was once again a difficulty with the locals, this time the authorities. The Greek school started in 1804 was under the control of the Austrian government, which insisted on German studies and set the criteria for awarding qualifications. The Greek school became less popular, Greeks went instead to German-speaking schools, and many became Austrian citizens.

The Greeks of Vienna might be deprived of Greek education but by the end of the eighteenth century they had Greek newspapers. The first, started in 1784, was short lived, and nothing of it remains, even its title. A more successful venture was the twice-weekly *Ephimerís* (Daily) whose first issue, on 31 December 1790, optimistically proclaimed: 'To the dear reader: here, long awaited and long promised, is a newspaper in demotic Greek, a new plant which will soon grow and flourish.'⁵ In fact it lasted eight years, and was later followed in 1811 by the much more intellectual *Lóyios Ermís* (Literary Mercury), which discussed the language question – demotic versus the formal *katharévousa* – and the ideas of the Enlightenment. In 1821 the Austrian government ordered the editor to publish the denunciation by the Orthodox patriarch of the Greek rising. The editor complied under duress, but immediately closed the paper.

These Greek emigrants to the northern Balkans and beyond might be prosperous, have their own schools, churches and newspapers and in some cases take foreign citizenship, but the link with their origins remained strong. Rich Greeks supported education in their home towns: one Budapest merchant gave money to found a farm school in Kozáni, and another provided bursaries for poor students in Kozáni to attend universities. Exiles would go home for festivals, both church and secular, but these visits were sometimes painfully short, as the lament of a Koritsá girl shows: 'This husband of mine spends twelve years in foreign lands and three nights at home. Three hours before dawn I found the doors open and the horse gone. He came with the night and

left with the day.’⁶ And some exiles felt the full pain of nostalgia: ‘A foreign land, prison, discontent, or the pain of love – of all four it is a foreign land which chafes the most.’⁷

Naturally enough, given Greece’s long coastline and the profusion of Greek islands in the Aegean, it was the sea that often took Greeks abroad. Even before Turkish rule Greeks were to be found building ships for foreign navies, and in the Venetian arsenal of the first half of the fifteenth century Greek islanders were considered some of the finest galley-builders. Later the Greek islands were required to provide ships for the Turkish navy – eight galleys in 1621, and 50 years later fourteen. In the following century carpenters were summoned to Constantinople from Chíos and Hydra to work on repairing Turkish ships, a constantly necessary task: ‘In this year’, ran a 1714 firman from Sultan Ahmed III, ‘all the warships of my Imperial fleet in the Imperial dockyard – ships of the line, corvettes, frigates and transports – are in need of repair.’⁸

The sea also took Greeks abroad as merchants. As early as 1490 there were sixteen Greek merchants listed as entering Kaffa in the Crimea during that year, and in the middle of the sixteenth century there were 200 houses in Ancona belonging to Greek merchants. There was also service in foreign navies: Cretans served in the Turkish navy a century before the Turks took over the island, and Cretans, including El Greco’s brother, acted for the other side as privateers for Venice against the Turks. And as we have seen there were some Greeks who practised small-scale piracy on their own account.

Sailing a small ship in the eastern Mediterranean was a hazardous business. Winds were unpredictable and could swing from moderate to ferocious in moments, especially at the equinoxes, as they still do. Navigation depended on the skill and experience of the pilot. ‘He knows the course of the stars and can always orient himself,’ says an early writer. ‘He knows the value of signs, both regular, accidental and abnormal, of good and bad weather. He distinguishes the regions of the ocean by the fish, by the colour of the water and the nature of the bottom, by the birds, the landmarks and other indications.’⁹ Charts and portolans, that is collections of useful information about harbours, coasts and sailing generally, were expensive rarities, and in any case few sailors could read. Some thought that things had little improved by the start of the nineteenth century. According to Jakob Bartholdy, a Prussian visitor to Greece in 1803–4, ‘Everything one hears about the nautical prowess of the Hydriots needs to be taken with a pinch of salt. They blunder like blind men among the rocks of the Aegean and it is a wonder that there are not more accidents.’¹⁰ But as Bartholdy lost no opportunity of denigrating the Greeks his observation too should be taken *cum grano*.

The first significant boost to the Greeks as sea traders on their own account came from the export of grain. From about 1550 there was increasing demand for grain in the central and western Mediterranean, basically because

population was increasing while food production remained static. Naples suffered six famines between 1560 and 1600, Portugal became a massive importer of grain, and even fertile Sicily needed grain from abroad. Constantinople was threatened with famine three times between 1589 and 1600, and for long periods thereafter the Ottoman Empire banned grain exports from its territories. Much of the Greek grain trade was therefore illicit, riskier but potentially more profitable. By one estimate, in the second half of the eighteenth century 40 per cent of the wheat grown in Greece was exported.

The main market for grain was Italy, and it was on the western side of Greece and along the Adriatic coast to the north that ships to carry it were developed. In Greece the main shipyards were at Mesolongi with its nearby islet of Anatolikó (modern Etolikó), and at Galaxídhī some 30 miles inside the Gulf of Corinth on its north shore. There was fierce rivalry between the two, Mesolongi being financed by Iánnina money and Galaxídhī by rich merchants in Pátras. The development of shipping at Mesolongi was remarkably quick: before 1740 it had only small vessels but by 1764 Mesolongi and Anatolikó between them owned 75 ships, two thirds of them locally built, and of capacities of up to 300 tons. According to a report early in the following century Galaxídhī had 50 ships of 150 to 300 tons, more vessels than the whole of Crete.

Even greater opportunities for Greek shipping came from the ending of the war between Russia and Turkey of which the Orlov revolt was a part. Russia defeated the Turks at sea, notably at the 1770 battle of Çesme on the Turkish coast opposite Chíos in which fireships were devastatingly effective against the Turkish ships. On land the Russians occupied the Crimea and won a string of victories in the Danube region. In 1771 the Turks, in desperate straits, had formed an alliance with Austria, under which Turkey would cede territory in return for military assistance. But a year later Austria abandoned this alliance, to join Russia and Prussia in the partition of Poland. Prussia and Russia had no scruples about this – ‘Catherine and I are brigands,’ said Frederick of Prussia¹¹ – and Maria Theresa of Austria overcame hers. Alas poor Poland, whose situation had triggered the Russo-Turkish war and indirectly contributed to its ending. In this first partition of 1772 Poland lost about a third of its territory and population to the three predatory powers, in the second partition of 1793 it lost half the remainder, and the final partition of 1795 brought a dissolution of the state.

The war between Russia and Turkey was ended in 1774 by the Treaty of Kutchuk-Kainardji, a village just south of the Danube in today’s Bulgaria. Under this treaty Turkey had to pay an enormous war indemnity of seven and a half million piastres, equivalent to half a year’s total imperial revenue. The Treaty of Kutchuk-Kainardji also extended Russia’s territory to the northern shores of the Black Sea, and Russian commercial shipping obtained the right to sail freely in the Black Sea and into the Mediterranean: Russia’s century-

old aim of expansion southward was at last achieved. Significantly for the Greeks, the treaty was extended some years later in 1783 to allow Greek ships to fly the Russian flag and be registered as Russian, opening the way for Greek merchant ships to trade throughout the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. Greek shipbuilding flourished, Greek ships voyaged more and more widely, and trade by sea increasingly took Greeks abroad.

Three of the Aegean islands took the greatest advantage of this new freedom of operation: Hydra and Spétses off the north-east coast of the Peloponnese, and the tiny island of Psará some twenty miles off Chíos on the opposite side of the Aegean. Until about 1750 only small ships of 15 to 50 tons had been used, and voyages were limited to the Aegean and Constantinople. In the second half of the century much larger ships began to be built, voyages were extended, and profits from maritime trade enormously increased.

Thus on Hydra the first 100-ton ship was built in 1745. It was described as ‘unsightly and double-ended’, but nevertheless sailed as far as Alexandria, Kephalonía and Trieste. The first ship of 250 tons followed in 1757. In 1766 the French consul at Koróni in the southern Peloponnese was already reporting that Hydra threatened French trade in the area. By 1786 Hydra had 120 ships, two thirds of them over 45 tons, and the larger ones sailed to Venice or Livorno. The number of Hydra ships roughly stabilised after that, but carrying capacity increased up to 550 tons.

Similar developments followed on the other two islands. In 1792 Spétses built its first large ship of 254 tons, and Psará its first large ship of 150 tons two years later. One effect of this increased maritime activity was that the Turks demanded increasing numbers of the islands’ sailors to serve in the Turkish navy: from Hydra, for example, 10 in 1745, 50 in 1770, and between 100 and 500 each year from 1797 to the outbreak of the war of independence in 1821.

Until the latter part of the eighteenth century most shipbuilding was done by eye, without diagrams and without calculation of ratios. But by the end of the century more scientific methods had been introduced, as described by a historian of Psará:

A certain Stamátis, a master craftsman, arrived there from Chíos, totally illiterate but with experience behind him as a carpenter, and he introduced fundamental changes in the methods of ship construction. For example, he first constructed a model where he laid down the lines of the ship, used drawings to make a template of every rib, made all the ribs of the framework and constructed the whole ship from the drawing-board, as is the practice among Greek shipbuilders of today [1862]. It was this Stamátis who first regularised the method of balancing a ship’s lines to make it perfectly symmetrical. It was he who laid down the ratios of a ship’s beam and depth to its keel length. It was Stamátis too who laid down the first principles for determining the size of the timbers.¹²

Nevertheless the tools for shipbuilding remained primitive, and Samuel Howe, writing during the war of independence, described the tools in use on the island of Skópelos: a block of wood with a haft through the middle as a

mallet, a notched iron hoop as a saw, a split piece of oak as dividers and, most useful of all, a long well-tempered knife.

The growth of Greek shipping brought prosperity to many Greeks, and sometimes spectacular profits. According to the French consul at Árta the profit on exported grain was 60 per cent, on tobacco 400 per cent, and on some other products even higher. Greeks employed by the shippers increasingly replaced local selling agents at the port of delivery, thus keeping the substantial agent's commission within the business. But the profitable export of grain and other agricultural products was often resented by the Greeks who could no longer afford to buy them at home.

The Napoleonic wars increased profits further, partly because west European merchants largely disappeared from the Mediterranean and partly because running the English blockade of the southern French coast was so lucrative. Thus the aggregate profits of all the Hydra merchants reached a peak in 1816, but by 1820 had fallen to less than a fifth of that level. This sharp fall in prosperity, it has been suggested, coupled with the resentment of those who felt that the prosperity had been achieved at their expense, fuelled the general Greek discontent that in 1821 boiled over into revolt.

At the base of this flourishing of Greek maritime trade were, of course, the sailors who made up the crews. Samuel Howe, though generally sympathetic to the Greeks, was critical of the way the crews worked: 'The interior of each vessel presented a scene of still greater confusion and insubordination: there was the Captain – but between him and the common sailor, there was a void, unfilled by an officer – no lieutenants or midshipmen, or grade of any kind. No portion of duty was allotted: no gangs were formed; if a sailor saw anything that appeared to him necessary to be done, he did it without waiting for an order; or if an order was given, all hands sprung to perform it at once, though not more than five, perhaps, were necessary.'¹³ But a more appreciative if slightly condescending picture comes from the French traveller Antoine Castellan, who had time to get to know the Greek sailors on a voyage of several months in 1796.

'Let us gather together', he wrote,

some of those scattered traits which compose the portrait of the Greeks with whom we have been living. Captain, officers, sailors, all had the same qualities and the same defects, more or less. Their fundamental character seemed to be a mixture of light-heartedness, weakness, and boastfulness. As easily moved to tears as children, the very next minute they forget the reason for their pity. Excitable as children, they let themselves be carried away to a furious pitch of anger, and quieten down just as easily if they encounter indifference or are overawed by firm treatment. We did not notice among them those antipathies, those inveterate hatreds which lead men to revenge and betrayal. They often quarrelled among themselves; insults would lead to a fight between two opponents, but a third would put a stop to it by shouting more loudly and striking more vehemently: the quarrel would end at that, and a quarter of an hour later would be forgotten. Sensitive to upbraiding and to blame, praise pleases them much more than rewards; the slightest success fills them with energy. Courageous, and often foolhardy, but without enough self-control to be cautious, their ardour cools down upon reflection. They become discouraged, lose their heads; fear overcomes them and their last resource is to call religion to their aid; then they prostrate themselves before the Panayía, pray feverishly, make vows, and promise pilgrimages

which they sometimes perform. Usually very sober, they nevertheless made the most of an opportunity to have a feast, and then they abandoned themselves to excess and bore the ensuing suffering with a steadfastness of purpose and above all with more gaiety than we could. Farewell, good people who are wrongfully scorned and so unreasonably maligned because you are not well enough known. I have compared you to children, and, in truth, all that you need is a deeper and wider education in order to become men.¹⁴

Greeks and the Enlightenment

The Enlightenment was a Europe-wide movement that began in the latter part of the seventeenth century. Its aim was to remove the heavy blanket of tradition, religious authority and inherited belief that its leaders believed was stifling thought and denying political freedom. These leaders all argued for an increase of religious toleration and stricter limits on government power. They included philosophers in the narrower sense of those concerned with the foundations of knowledge in both science and morality, such as Spinoza, Locke and Kant. There were also scientists such as Newton and Linnaeus, economists (Turgot and Adam Smith), political reformers (Condorcet, Beccaria and Bentham), historians (the Scot William Robertson) and statesmen such as the framers of the American Declaration of Independence and Constitution. The largest group were the French *philosophes*, broadly concerned with questions of man and his relation to God and to society. Among the most influential were Montesquieu, Voltaire and Rousseau, and we should add Diderot and d'Alembert, the compilers of the *Encyclopédie*, a twenty-volume compendium of all aspects of knowledge.

Two basic principles underlay Enlightenment thinking. One was commitment to reason, and rejection of anything that stands in its way. Thus the *Encyclopédie* defined a *philosophe* as one who 'trampling on prejudice, universal consent, authority, in a word all that enslaves most minds, dares to think for himself'. The other principle was that, just as laws can be found regulating natural phenomena, so there should be a search for laws and principles governing human behaviour. As Voltaire wrote, 'It would be very singular that all nature and all the stars should obey eternal laws, and that there should be one little animal five feet tall which, despite these laws, could always act as suited its own caprice.'¹

Derived from these principles, and influenced particularly by the ideas of Rousseau and Voltaire, were the doctrines of liberty, equality and the rights of man – of particular relevance to the Greeks. In 1789 these doctrines were proclaimed in the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of Citizens: 'Men are born, and always continue, free and equal in respect of their rights. The end of all political associations is the preservation of the natural and imprescriptible rights of man; and these rights are Liberty, Property, Security, and Resistance of Oppression.' The Declaration was drafted by the Marquis

de Lafayette, who had served with distinction in America's war of independence. He based the French Declaration on the American Declaration of Independence of 1776, which had been even more explicit about the right of the people to overthrow an unjust government: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government.'

It will be clear from the names already mentioned of original Enlightenment thinkers that they came from many different countries including France, England, Scotland, America, Germany, Sweden and Italy. No such original thinkers came from Greece. Greeks were recipients of Enlightenment ideas rather than originators of them. Furthermore those Greeks who were influenced by the Enlightenment were a limited number of the Greek intelligentsia often living outside the territory of today's Greece.

Those Greeks influenced by the Enlightenment fall, broadly speaking, into two categories: educators and revolutionaries. Educators include those who taught in Greek schools both in Greece and abroad, those who produced summaries of Enlightenment works or directly translated them, and those who produced Greek periodicals. Revolutionaries criticised the present state of Greece, often with particular animus against the church, and looked forward to Greek regeneration, revolution and independence. But the thinking of the two groups overlapped, since both educators and revolutionaries often saw better education as an essential preliminary to revolution.

One of the earliest of the Greek educators influenced by the Enlightenment was Evyénios Voúlgaris. He was born in 1716 in Corfu, and it was during his schooling there that he may have been introduced to the works of John Locke. Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* had been published only a few decades earlier in 1690, and its novel approach to philosophy formed one of the main strands of Voúlgaris' thinking. Another strand, of Orthodox religious belief, was evident when at the age of 21 Voúlgaris became a deacon. In 1742 he became head of a school in Iánnina and in 1750 of one in Kozáni, after a dispute with a conservative teacher at a rival Iánnina school.

An even more prestigious appointment followed in 1753 when Voúlgaris became head of the recently established academy at the monastery of Vatopédhi on Mt Athos. The academy had been founded by the reforming patriarch Kírillos V, one of whose objects was to improve monastic education, and it was open both to Mt Athos monks and to pupils from outside. The academy was housed in a special building of three floors on higher ground next to the monastery, and had about 170 small rooms for students as well as lecture rooms and a library. The more advanced courses, in philosophy and mathematics, were taught by Voúlgaris himself. Of all the schools then in Greece it probably had the most influential supporter in the patriarch, the best

facilities, and in Voúlgaris one of the most progressive teachers.

Nevertheless, after only six years Voúlgaris abruptly left the academy, which thereafter went into decline; a visitor to the site in 1801 said that ‘its only inhabitant that we found was a solitary cock.’² The reasons for Voúlgaris’ departure are not clear, but his patron Kírillos V was no longer patriarch and it seems that Voúlgaris’ modern approach to education offended the conservatives among the Mt Athos monks. But the years had not been wasted. Voúlgaris had taken over, from the previous incompetent head, only some 70 students and perhaps as few as 20, but by the end of his time the number was almost 200. And in a valedictory and somewhat bitter letter to Kírillos V he claimed that there were ‘large numbers of men whom I enlightened to the best of my ability and who are now making their appearance and being heard in so many communities, and those others who soon will be appearing and will be heard’.³

In the rest of his long life Voúlgaris never again either taught or lived in the territory of today’s Greece. After his time on Mt Athos he taught at the Patriarchal Academy in Constantinople from 1759 to 1762, but this post too ended in disputes, particularly with the then patriarch. From Constantinople Voúlgaris went to Halle and Leipzig where he arranged for the publication of his works. In 1772 he became librarian at the court of Catherine the Great of Russia and later an archbishop in the Ukraine. In 1781 he retired to a Russian monastery, where in 1806 he died at the age of 90.

As well as being a teacher, Voúlgaris was a prolific writer and produced a dozen or so substantial books. These were either direct translations of Enlightenment works, by Voltaire and others, or Voúlgaris’ own compilations of their ideas. The subjects covered logic, metaphysics, arithmetic, geometry and astronomy. His own book *Logic*, which he used as his teaching textbook, gives a good indication of what influenced his own thinking and how he wished to influence those he taught.

The *Logic* is a massive work of 586 pages. It is divided into a long introduction on philosophical thinking followed by five parts, on ideas, thought, method, judgement and a final part on more general topics. The discussion is detailed and dense. Ideas, for example, are presented as changes of state, since new ideas change our view of the world. Voúlgaris maintains that there are three sources of these idea-changes. The first is God through revelation and is outside the scope of philosophy. The other two, following Locke’s ideas, are reflection – the source of judging and remembering – and reflection coupled with sensation, which enables us to think about cause and effect, pleasure and pain. Other Enlightenment thinkers besides Locke – Descartes, Hobbes, Leibniz and others – are extensively quoted or referred to in the *Logic*, as well as Aristotle and Byzantine writers. This must have been extremely tough fare for Voúlgaris’ minimally educated pupils on Mt Athos – yet they flocked there in increasing numbers.

There were further barriers to learning for these pupils. One was that the

Logic from which Voúlgaris taught was written in pure Ancient Greek, in his view the only possible medium for philosophical ideas. The resources of the popular language were, he said, mere ‘philosophical wordlets’, and ‘those booklets which profess to philosophise in the vulgar tongue are to be hooted off the stage.’⁴

Another difficulty was that during Voúlgaris’ teaching career all his writings, including the *Logic*, were available only in manuscript, and their later printing was all done abroad: the *Logic* was printed in Leipzig in 1766, most of his other works variously in Vienna, Venice or Moscow in the early 1800s. So the circulation of Greek texts in Voúlgaris’ time had not advanced since Stephen Gerlach acquired the manuscript of a patriarchal history two centuries earlier, and it was impossible for Greek education to make significant advances without widely available printed texts.

The two strands of Voúlgaris’ thought – philosophical enquiry and acceptance of divine revelation – never sat easily together. He rejected as ‘the merest suppositions’ theological explanations in physics to explain the attraction of bodies. On the other hand, he rejected the astronomical system of Copernicus because it was ‘against the pages of Scripture’. Perhaps his aspirations to rise in the Church hierarchy tilted the balance in favour of revelation, as in 1768 he maintained that ‘In the divine and mysterious dogmas of the faith, freedom of thought is brazenness.’⁵ As we shall see, the antagonism between the Church and the Enlightenment became increasingly overt and fierce.

Two other Greek educators of the period held views markedly different from those of Voúlgaris: his contemporary Iósipos Misiódhax (c.1730–1800) and the younger man Athanásios Psalídhas (1767–1829). Misiódhax was born in Wallachia in today’s Romania, a Vlach by birth and originally a Vlach speaker. His name is derived from the old Roman province of Moesia, which stretched along the banks of the Danube as far as the Black Sea. However, Misiódhax became completely Hellenised in language and outlook: he referred to Greeks as his kith and kin (*omoyenís*) and to Greek schools as ‘our schools’. He was educated in Thessalonika, Smyrna and at the Mt Athos academy under Voúlgaris, whose curriculum he thought was far too ambitious. He learned his physics and mathematics at the University of Padua, and from 1765 to 1777 taught these subjects as head of the academy of Iasi in north-east Romania, a return to his roots. But like Voúlgaris he fell foul of conservative opposition and gave up teaching to travel to Budapest, Vienna and Venice and to write. His writings, all published in Vienna, show the range of his interests: a treatise on the education of children, mainly derived straight from Locke, a *Theory of Geography*, and a more general *Apologia*. He died in Bucharest in 1800.

Misiódhax differed from Voúlgaris in a number of ways. Despite his earlier praise of Voúlgaris as a man of the first distinction as both writer and teacher, he later condemned Voúlgaris’ mathematics as a total muddle. Misiódhax was

also far more critical than Voúlgaris of religion and particularly of religious observances: the pious offerings of ten or twenty people, he said, would be enough to set up a decent academy. Whereas Voúlgaris wrote in Ancient Greek, Misiódhax used and advocated everyday common language. He wrote that the use of the ancient language in teaching pupils produced ‘fearsome constructions in which their fathers conceal themselves in deep thickets’, and that ‘this culpable prejudice in favour of antiquity is the cause of our meagre and indeed our bad knowledge.’⁶ Misiódhax was firmly on the side of the practical. Logic and metaphysics he regarded as of little use or even interest, and mathematics and all the branches of science as much more important. The purpose of education, he believed, should be personal and social betterment, and the true philosophy was ‘a unitary theory which investigates the nature of things with the constant end of providing for and establishing the true happiness which man, *qua* man, can enjoy on this earth’.⁷

The last of this trio of educators was Athanásios Psalídhas. He was born in Iánnina in 1767 and was educated there until the age of eighteen. Then after two years in Russia he went to Vienna, where he studied medicine, philosophy and science. It was here between 1791 and 1795 that he published his main surviving writings, including *Alithís Evdhemonía* (True Happiness) and *Kalokinímata* (Moves Towards Progress). In 1795 he returned to Iánnina as a teacher and became head of the progressive school where Voúlgaris had taught. Here Psalídhas’ classes included philosophy, history, geography, mathematics and the rarity of experimental science, for which he brought the equipment from Vienna. Psalídhas came under attack from the head of the conservative school in Iánnina as Voúlgaris had done, and Psalídhas was accused of atheism, Voltairism and other heresies. As well as teaching, Psalídhas became an adviser to Ali Pasha, the semi-independent ruler of Iánnina and of large tracts of northern Greece. In 1822, the year of Ali Pasha’s downfall and death, Psalídhas left for Corfu, where he became an honorary doctor of the Ionian Academy, involving himself in the affairs of the war of independence and corresponding with its leaders. He died in Corfu in 1829.

Psalídhas made clear his reliance on Enlightenment thinkers – Locke, Leibniz, Voltaire, Rousseau and Kant among others. He told Greeks living abroad to ‘imitate the Europeans, the civilised and enlightened nations in which you are living’.⁸ Nevertheless his philosophy was far from rigorous. He criticised Voúlgaris’ three sources of ideas – revelation, reflection and sensation. Revelation, Psalídhas declared, cannot be a source of ideas since it is outside the realm of reason. Reflection, which Psalídhas equated with the activity of ‘the soul itself’, was dismissed because the soul cannot produce any idea just by itself. There remains only sensation, and in ‘True Happiness’ Psalídhas wrote: ‘All the ideas we possess we must acquire through the senses.’⁹

So far so coherent. But in ‘Moves Towards Progress’ he maintains that there are four truths essential to the good life, the first of which is that God

exists. God is infinite, and ‘The mind can neither acquire nor represent to itself the idea of an infinite being.’¹⁰ Yet the mind does have such an idea, and must do so to live aright. So the idea of God must come through revelation, and revelation was supposed not to be a source of ideas. Psalídhas had failed in his attempts to ride two horses at once, and his proposals for reconciling revelation and reason were no more successful than those of Voúlgaris.

Psalídhas attacked both Voúlgaris’ thinking and Voúlgaris the man. He criticised, with some justice, Voúlgaris’ use of Ancient Greek. He pounced on mistakes by Voúlgaris, who had written that the hypotenuse of a right-angled triangle was equal to the sum of the other two sides, not their squares. He maintained, again with some justice, that Voúlgaris’ *Logic* is badly disorganised. But Psalídhas attacked Voúlgaris personally as well as professionally. The whole output of Voúlgaris, he wrote, displays ‘his vanity, his egotism, his pride and arrogance, and in consequence the emptiness of his reputation’, and in a final outburst: ‘Despising his country and all his own race, he has taken himself off on the slightest of excuses to barbarous foreign lands, letting patriotism come second to pleasure and greed, and without putting either his life or his substance at risk for the sake of his people.’¹¹ The progressive Greek followers of the Enlightenment had more than enough difficulty with conservative traditionalists. Their efforts to improve Greek education might have made more progress if there had at least been solidarity among them.

The second group of Greeks influenced by the Enlightenment were primarily revolutionaries rather than educators, and they looked to the overthrow of Turkish rule and the establishment of a free and independent Greece. Two names are prominent: Rígas Pheréos, also called Velestinlís (1757–98), and Adhamántios Koraís (1748–1833). Both also looked to education, in one form or another, as a prelude to Greece’s regeneration.

Rígas was born in the Thessalian town of Velestíno, ancient Phére, hence his two toponyms. His father was wealthy, and Rígas was well educated, first by a village priest at home and later at local schools. After a few years as a schoolmaster in Thessaly he left for Constantinople some time between 1777 and 1780 when he was in his early twenties. There he continued his studies, learning French, Italian and German. He also became friendly with the families of the phanariots, the Greeks who filled higher posts in the Ottoman bureaucracy and also served as governors of the semi-independent principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia in today’s Romania. In 1785 Rígas became private secretary to the phanariot Alexander Ipsilántis, who two years later was appointed governor of Moldavia, and was the grandfather of the Ipsilántis brothers who played important roles in the war of independence. For the rest of his professional career Rígas served as secretary to a succession of senior officials, mainly in Bucharest or in the Austrian capital Vienna. In Bucharest Rígas became friendly with Misiódhax, and shared with him a commitment to communicate in the language of the people, not in Ancient

Greek.

Rígas' companion and biographer Christóphoros Perrevós described Rígas' appearance and character when he was in his thirties: 'He was of average height, with a thick neck, a round red-and-white face, fair moustache, rather broad nose, wide forehead, bulky temples, large ears and a decidedly large round, powerful head. His merits were charm and intelligence, a lively nature, articulate, industrious, of simple habits, sympathetic; the persuasiveness on his lips attracted everyone to his advice.'¹²

Rígas was still in his twenties when his first works were published in Vienna, and these show that he was already well aware of Enlightenment thinking. One was his *Anthology of Physics* published in 1790 in 24 chapters that covered, as well as physics as understood today, the subjects of minerals, plants and animals, including man. The most important source was the French *Encyclopédie*. At the same time Rígas was translating Montesquieu's *Esprit des Lois*, though this translation was never published. A curious work by Rígas, also published in 1790, was the *School of Delicate Lovers*, a Greek translation of 6 of the 261 stories, many salacious if not pornographic, by the French writer Retif de la Bretonne. It has often been asked why Rígas spent time on such frivolity, but Rígas' choice of these six stories points to the answer. Each deals with love between young people of very different class: in two the humble lad loves his employer's daughter, and in the other four a rich aristocrat loves a poor girl. The message was clearly that equality overrides all social divisions. The stories were also moral lessons, advocating hard work, no sex before marriage and not even forwardness on the part of girls. Rígas himself wrote that the book aimed to provide 'both amusement and a kind of moral improvement'.¹³

Rígas' works of the following years had a more pointed revolutionary message and can be divided into two groups. In the first group the message was only implicit. It included an engraving of the head of Alexander the Great, with a lengthy inscription in both Greek and French, clearly intended to remind both Greeks and foreigners of Greece's glorious past. There was also a series of detailed maps, covering twelve sheets, entitled *Map of Greece Including its Islands and Part of its Many Outposts (apikíes) in Europe and Asia Minor*, and including commentaries on historic sites and battles. Greece was shown as including Albania, Serbia, Bulgaria and parts of Turkey, and again the implicit message was clear: a greater Greece would supplant the Ottoman Empire in Europe and even beyond. Finally there was a Greek translation from French of parts of the *Voyage du Jeune Anacharsis* by Jean Jacques Barthélemy, the story of a Scythian prince of the fourth century BC who goes to classical Greece to be civilised. Greece, it was to be understood, had laid the foundations of European civilisation and deserved to be restored to her ancient pre-eminence.

The second group of Rígas' works were two more openly propagandist books, both published in 1797. One was the *Military Manual*, based on a book

by an Austrian field-marshal, and including two military songs that begin ‘All of the nations go to war’ and ‘Why thus endure, O friends and brothers all?’ The other, Rígas’ most significant work, was the *New Political Order* in four parts: a revolutionary proclamation, a statement of the rights of man, a proposed constitution of the Hellenic Republic, and finally a *thoúrios* or battle song.

The revolutionary proclamation is addressed to all who suffer under Turkish tyranny, Greeks and Turks alike, ‘without any distinction of religion since all are the creatures of God and children of the first man’. The Sultan is denounced as being ‘wholly given over to his filthy woman-obsessed appetites’, and accused of reducing Greece to a state of abominable anarchy where no one ‘is assured either of his life, his honour, or his property’. Therefore the oppressed people have already, in Rígas’ view, resolved to ‘raise up manfully its overburdened neck’, to ‘equip its arms with the weapons of vengeance and despair’ and to proclaim ‘the holy and blameless rights which are God given’.¹⁴ The proclamation did not quite call for armed rebellion. This came in the next part, where Rígas set out these rights of man. This section is largely based on the versions of the declaration of the rights of man that prefixed the successive French Constitutions between 1789 and 1795, but with additions by Rígas. There are four natural rights, Rígas wrote: to be equal, to be free, and that the law should protect both our lives and our property. To defend these rights is the most important right of all. ‘When the government breaches the rights of the people, then for the people to make a revolution, take up arms and punish the tyrants is the most sacred of all rights and the most compelling of all obligations.’¹⁵

The law, which is the safeguard of these rights, springs from something like Rousseau’s general will: ‘The law is that free decision which has come about with the consent of all people.’ Rígas goes into some detail about how the law should operate: only the law can restrict a man’s freedom, not the whim of a judge; law is for the fault, so punishment is the same for all, and must fit the fault; legislation cannot be retrospective; a man is innocent until proved guilty.

One article of the rights of man concerns education. Schools for both boys and girls must be established in all the villages, since ‘from education is generated progress, with which free nations shine.’¹⁶ And one of the last articles again emphasises Rígas’ ecumenical vision of a new state or empire containing all the oppressed ethnic groups: ‘When a single inhabitant of this empire is wronged, the entire empire is wronged. The Bulgar must be moved when the Greek suffers, and vice versa, and both for the Albanian and the Wallachian.’¹⁷

After the rights of man comes Rígas’ constitution for the new state, again closely modelled on the revolutionary French constitutions. All citizens of this state, of whatever religion or race, are equal, and citizenship is very widely granted: to any foreigner who has lived in the state for a year and is working,

or who has married a Greek woman or adopted a Greek child, and to anyone who speaks Greek and helps Greece, even if he lives in the Antipodes. Education is again stressed: foreigners who bring their skills or wisdom to Greece, and Greeks who go abroad to acquire them, are to be honoured. A scheme of government is outlined, very like the system that emerged in the war of independence, with local assemblies and a national government consisting of a legislature and an executive. This national government is to control the army, and army officers are to hold their ranks only in time of war, after which 'all are equal and brothers.'¹⁸ How were the citizens to know their rights and obligations? Rígas' solution, for a land without printing presses, was for the rights of man and the constitution to be engraved on copper tablets that should be set up in every town and village 'where each hour each citizen may see in what consists the priceless treasure of his beloved freedom'.¹⁹

The final part of Rígas' *New Political Order* is his *thoúrios* or battle song, still popular in Greece. It is in the galloping metre of a traditional Greek brigand ballad, as reproduced in this translation, and opens with the lines:

Shall we live in the mountain passes, like warriors of old?
Shall we live alone like lions, on the top of the mountain ridge?
Shall we live in caves in darkness, shall slavery drive us away?
Shall we say farewell to our family and to our beloved land?
No! Better an hour of freedom, than forty years as a slave.

Similarly, the oath against tyranny begins:

O Lord of all creation, I solemnly swear to Thee
Never to act as tyrants do and never be slave to them.

And concludes:

And if this oath is broken, may lightning strike me down,
And may I be burnt to nothing and vanish like smoke on the wind.²⁰

But even in the full flow of revolutionary fervour Rígas maintains his ecumenical vision. The revolution is to be not against the Turks as such but against tyranny. Thus Turks are summoned to join in the coming struggle and not only the Turks; in the course of some twenty lines Rígas calls for support from Bulgarians, Albanians, Armenians and Arabs, and from the people of Malta, Egypt and Aleppo, and says to them:

We who suffer under the yoke, let us kill the ravening wolves
Who keep us in harsh subjection, Christian and Turk alike.²¹

Rígas' revolutionary enthusiasm and writings ultimately brought his undoing. At the end of 1797 he was in Vienna intending, as he told friends, to travel with companions first to Trieste, also in Austrian territory, and then to stir up revolt in the Peloponnese and in northern Greece and Albania. He had been informed that the Greeks were 'roaring like lions'.²² He sent ahead to a

friend in Trieste boxes containing many copies of his writings, clearly intended for distribution in Greece, with an accompanying letter to his friend. This friend was away, and his business partner opened the letter. The letter has not survived, but the business partner was alarmed by its contents and handed it to the Austrian authorities. After Rígas had reached Trieste there was a knock on his hotel bedroom door in the middle of a December night; Rígas was arrested and his boxes seized.

By the end of February fourteen suspects, including Rígas, were under arrest. Six were Austrian subjects and sent into internal exile in Leipzig, from where they all later returned. The other eight, including Rígas, were Ottoman subjects and handed over to the Ottoman authorities. The Austrians were very willing to cooperate with the Ottomans as for some years both had been facing local unrest. Pasvanoglu Osman, nominally a Turkish pasha, had been trying since 1792 to carve out for himself, at the expense of both Austria and Turkey, an independent fiefdom based on the Danube town of Vidin. The Austrians feared that their subjects too might be stirred to revolt by a rising in Greece, and within a few weeks of Rígas' arrest the Greek newspaper *Ephimerís* was closed. The Turkish ambassador to Vienna wrote to the Austrian police chief: 'Now more than ever great monarchs must support each other in order to oppose effectively this general political disorder.'²³ This cooperation precluded any trial in court, which none of the suspects ever faced.

At the end of April 1798 Rígas and his seven companions were sent to Belgrade, chained in pairs, and imprisoned in a grim medieval tower overlooking the Danube. There at the end of June, after six months' incarceration, they all died, according to different accounts either strangled or shot or drowned. None of the bodies was ever found. It is reported that just before he died Rígas said: 'This is how brave men die. I have sown; the time will soon come when my country will gather the harvest.'²⁴

Rígas quickly became revered. When in 1809 Byron met the young Andhréas Lóndos, later a revolutionary leader, the poet mentioned Rígas' name, at which Lóndos immediately jumped up and 'clasping his hands repeated the name of the patriot with a thousand passionate exclamations, the tears streaming down his cheeks'.²⁵ In the next century Rígas' portrait was appropriated by the Communist resistance to German wartime occupation, and his name was used by the secret society of students opposed to Greece's military dictatorship of 1967–74. Rígas' dying words may well have been apocryphal, but his name is still alive today as both prophet and proto-martyr of the Greek revolution.

The last Greek figure to be considered in the context of the Enlightenment is Adhamántios Koraís, who was both educator and revolutionary. His prolific writings were designed to educate the Greeks, specifically along the lines that he favoured. This education would prepare the Greeks for revolution and independence, events to which Koraís constantly looked forward though he

was a severe and sometimes bitter critic of the revolution that actually happened.

Koraís was born in Smyrna in 1748, son of a wealthy merchant. His education was partly at the hands of incompetent schoolmasters, partly from tutors whom he sought out himself, and partly from the library inherited from his maternal grandfather. At the age of 23 he was sent to Amsterdam as representative of his father's business, and remained there for seven not very successful years. 'He was no businessman,' wrote a colleague, 'and it was a good thing that his father sent him off to study medicine.'²⁶ After four years back in Smyrna these studies took him to Montpellier in southern France and lasted another six years. At the age of 40, his education at last completed, he went to Paris in 1788, a year before the start of the French Revolution. He remained in Paris for the rest of his long life, in the course of which he never set foot on Greek soil.

Koraís witnessed at first hand the unfolding of the French Revolution, and this experience shaped all his future thinking about how Greece should be regenerated. At first the French Revolution seemed to be a model for Greece. The French had overthrown their oppressive rulers, the King and his nobility, and the Greeks would overthrow the Turks. The French had abolished the privileges of the clergy and brought the wealth of the Church into common ownership, and so would the Greeks. Koraís would not favour going as far as the French and imposing, as Robespierre did, a republican religion. Koraís himself was devout and it was not the Church itself but the corruption of the Church, especially the monasteries, which he condemned. The monks, he wrote, were even worse oppressors than the external ones, the Turks, and were concerned only with the rapacious preservation of their own power. The monasteries were dens of sloth, superstition and corruption. The Church needed to be saved from itself and return to the simplicity and humility of the early Church.²⁷

Koraís' early optimism soon faded. He was present at the storming of the Tuileries by a mob in June 1792, and heard Condorcet's vain attempt to restrain the attackers by appealing to reason and humanity. In January 1793 he witnessed the guillotining of Louis XVI in the Place de la Révolution, now somewhat ironically the Place de la Concorde. Koraís was in Paris during the Reign of Terror instituted by Robespierre in 1793, the factional struggles that followed, and the ending of the revolutionary period by Napoleon's coup d'état in November 1799. Koraís made his reaction clear: 'The age of Enlightenment has been destroyed by the impact of criminality and of ignorance posing as opposition to religion, while thinkers and artists have been condemned to inaction by the vandalism. Virtue and talent have fallen prey to the sword of the murderers.' And Koraís concluded: 'Freedom without justice is simply criminal.'²⁸

How then might the Greeks achieve freedom while maintaining justice? Koraís' answer was education. Near the end of his life Koraís wrote that 'the

increase and spread of education in the French nation gave birth to the love of liberty,'²⁹ though, as Koraís had seen, the French Revolution had not produced liberty with justice. French education was the fruit of the Enlightenment, and Koraís maintained that Greek education should be aligned with that of the enlightened nations of Europe by a process of what he called the pouring (*metakínosis*) of one into the other.

But Koraís was also committed to a parallel form of education: a return to the writings of ancient Greece. This would not only revive the wisdom of their ancestors in the minds of contemporary Greeks but would give them military prowess as well. His example was the Greek success against the Persians in the fifth century BC, at a time when the Greeks 'had not been deprived of their virtues'.³⁰ It was the successive occupiers from the Romans onwards who had deprived the Greeks of these virtues, which could be restored by a return to the learning of ancient Greece.

Koraís put this idea into practice by publishing editions of the ancient Greek writers. These formed his Hellenic library, which ran to seventeen volumes with nine companion volumes, and would have been even more comprehensive if the Greek Zosimádhēs brothers had not stopped their initial subsidy. All the volumes were prefaced by long introductions, headed 'Impromptu Thoughts', in what Koraís called the common language. Particularly passionate was his introduction, written in September 1821, to Aristotle's *Politics*: 'I can write no more, beloved fatherland, prevented as I am by the turmoil in my heart, which paralyses my hand and darkens my eyes with tears. I was a willing exile from your bosom, unable to bear the sight of your daily torments from the lawless acts of the barbarians. I have learned, beyond all my hopes, that your liberty, which had withered under the tyrants, has blossomed again. I shall not see or learn of its fruits, but I pray that they may be abundant and beautiful for all your children, my own brothers.'³¹

The common language for Koraís was not the demotic speech of the people but a compromise between demotic and more ancient forms of Greek. This was known as *katharévousa* or purged since it rejected foreign importations, especially Turkish or Italian. Koraís did not invent *katharévousa*; it already existed in a haphazard form, but Koraís and others systematised it. *Katharévousa* had a turbulent later history. In the 1830s in the newly independent Greek state *katharévousa* became the official language of government, the press and education. In the course of the nineteenth century creative writers increasingly adopted demotic rather than *katharévousa*. In 1913 the first textbooks in demotic were introduced in Greek primary schools, though secondary schools and higher education continued with *katharévousa*. From then on the language to be used in education became a highly contentious political issue, with left-wing governments increasing the use of demotic and their right-wing successors reversing the process. Only in the 1980s was a standard modern Greek, essentially demotic, used throughout the education system.

The difficulty with Koraís' insistence that the beneficial effects of education must precede revolution was that the right time for revolution never seemed to arrive. How in any case could one tell in advance if education had progressed far enough to prevent revolution falling into the wrong hands, and to ensure that freedom was accompanied by justice? Koraís consistently argued that revolution must wait, saying so well before the revolution (1807: 'our people need at least 50 years of education'), during the revolution (end of 1821: 'the event has come too soon for our interest; if it had come twenty years later . . .') and after independence (1831: 'the Greek rising was fully justified, but inopportune; the right time would have been 1850').³²

Consequently Koraís became an increasingly severe critic of the revolution that actually happened. At first he was delighted, as shown in his preface to Aristotle's *Politics* written only a few months after the revolution broke out. But in 1829, with the fighting virtually over and independence in some form assured, he wrote: 'That the revolution occurred before time was proved by the recklessness of the leaders of the revolution and by the continuing very foolish conduct of many politicians in Greece, conduct that gave rise to the flowing of so much innocent blood.'³³ Koraís also believed that a later revolution under more educated leaders would have prevented foreign interference: 'If the race had rulers adorned with education (as it certainly would have had if the revolution had occurred thirty years later) then foreigners would have been inspired with such respect that the wrongs suffered from the anti-Christian Holy Alliance would have been avoided.'³⁴ By the 'anti-Christian Holy Alliance' Koraís meant the European powers, and the wrongs were their continuing influence on Greece, their contribution to Greek independence being ignored.

Koraís believed that Russia was the most threatening of these powers and that Kapodhístrias, the first president of an independent Greece, was Russia's agent because he had once been joint foreign minister to the Tsar. From Paris Koraís encouraged opposition to Kapodhístrias and published pamphlets attacking him. The most intemperate was in the press awaiting publication when Koraís learned in October 1831 that Kapodhístrias had been assassinated. Instead of decently withdrawing it Koraís added an even more vicious preface and epilogue. Kapodhístrias was condemned for vile tyranny, breaking the laws of Greece, and opening the door to 'a flood of Cossacks'. He had deserved to be expelled from Greece, and the assassins were at fault for saving him from that fate.³⁵ This unworthy episode at the end of Koraís' life marked the sad decline of a scholar, visionary and passionate supporter of his country to an embittered and vindictive old man whose nostrums others had failed to follow.

All the Greek followers of the Enlightenment whom we have considered faced several difficulties. One was the language to be used to get their message across. Voúlgaris had favoured Ancient Greek, the others some form of the common language, of which the *katharévousa* championed by Koraís

was the most enduring. Another difficulty was how to disseminate their message. Greek newspapers were published in distant Vienna, and were closed down by the Austrian authorities on even the suspicion of subversion, as Rígas discovered. Books too were published abroad, mainly in Vienna, Venice or Paris, and were in any case expensive; it is doubtful if many Greeks even set eyes on them. Rígas' solution was his plan, which he did not have the chance to execute, to take his writings to Greece himself. For the future his constitution, in the absence of printing presses in Greece, was to be on engraved copper tablets in every village.

Finally, the Enlightenment was seen as an attack on religion. Enlightenment ideas were regarded as incompatible with religious belief, and Enlightenment thinkers severely criticised the corruption of the Orthodox Church, an institution largely revered by Greeks. As we shall see in the next chapter, the Church and its supporters responded vigorously to these threats.

The Enlightenment Attacked

The attacks on the Enlightenment, its ideas and its representatives, were initially on religious grounds: the Enlightenment was denounced for promoting atheism. In the course of the decades preceding the Greek revolution the attack was broadened: the Enlightenment was held to undermine morality, and finally to lead to the bloody overthrow of the established order, as the French Revolution had shown. Of all the Enlightenment thinkers, the most often quoted, and the most fiercely denounced, was Voltaire.

Voltaire was born in Paris in 1694. As a young man he quickly moved into the literary coteries of Paris and was soon in trouble for writing libellous poems, for which he was first exiled from Paris and then imprisoned for a year in the Bastille. From 1726 to 1729 he was in England, where he became friendly with the Walpoles, Congreve and Pope among others, and after his return published *Lettres Philosophiques sur les Anglais*, ostensibly in praise of England but by implication an attack on everything established in the Church and state of France.

In 1751 Voltaire went to the court of Frederick the Great of Prussia, at Frederick's invitation, but again Voltaire's sharp pen got him into trouble and he left under a cloud two years later. Voltaire, now in his sixties and rich from his writings and some successful speculations, settled at Ferney just outside Geneva. It was in this period that he vigorously took up the cause of many who had been unjustly treated, of whom the most famous was Jean Calas. Calas' eldest son had committed suicide, but Calas, a Huguenot, was accused on the flimsiest evidence of murdering him to prevent him becoming a Catholic. Calas was found guilty and executed by being broken on the wheel. Voltaire's campaign against this injustice led, unfortunately too late, to Calas being declared innocent and to compensation for the family from Louis XV.

In 1778, now aged 84, Voltaire returned to Paris, for the first time in 28 years, for the production of his new tragedy *Irène* and to a rapturous welcome. But the exertions were too much for him and three months later he died in the night, after sending away priests who had been summoned to administer the last rites.

Voltaire's literary output was vast, including plays, poetry, historical writings, stories of which *Candide* is the best known, and his prolific

correspondence. His views on the Church, religion and society are most openly expressed in his *Dictionnaire Philosophique*. This is the collection of his hortatory and propagandist essays that were published in various forms, some as entries in the *Encyclopédie*, during the last twenty or so years of his life, with some manuscript works found after his death. It is a dictionary only in the sense that the entries are in the alphabetical order of their titles.

The style is light, conversational, often ironic, and sometimes to make his point he uses fictional dialogues from the exotic past, such as the conversation in the 'Chinese Catechism' between a disciple of Confucius and a Chinese prince set two millennia in the past. As Voltaire wrote: 'I think the best way to fall on the infamous is to seem to have no wish to attack it.'¹ But on his major topics Voltaire makes himself abundantly clear.

Voltaire makes a distinction between state religion and theological religion. State religion ensures that the Church is run in an orderly way and that the ministers teach good behaviour to the people. 'Such a state religion can never make trouble. This is not true of theological religion. This is the source of all imaginable follies and disorders; it is the mother of fanaticism and civil discord; it is the enemy of mankind.' He also asks, ironically, 'After our holy religion, which is undoubtedly the only good one, which would be the least bad?' and answers: 'Would it not be the simplest? Would it not be that which taught much morality and very little dogma? That which tended to make men just without making them absurd? That which did not order one to believe in things that are impossible, contradictory, injurious to divinity, and pernicious to mankind, and which dared not menace with eternal punishment anyone possessing common sense?'²

This simplest of religions is that of the theist or deist, who believes in god with a small 'g' but not the God of the Church. 'The theist is a man firmly convinced of the existence of a supreme being. He does not know how god punishes, how he encourages, how he forgives, for he is not rash enough to flatter himself that he knows how god acts, but he knows that god does act and that he is just. The theist holds that religion consists neither in the opinions of an unintelligible metaphysic nor in a vain apparatus, but in worship and justice. To do good, that is his cult. To submit to god, that is his doctrine.'³ This religion is based on morality, not dogma: 'There is no morality in superstition, it is not in ceremonies, it has nothing in common with dogmas. It cannot be too often repeated that all dogmas are different, and that morality is the same among all men who use their reason. Therefore morality comes from god like light. Our superstitions are nothing but darkness. Reader, reflect, spread this truth, draw your conclusions.'⁴ Voltaire was thus attacking everything in Church ritual or teaching that conflicted with reason, including God as portrayed by the Church. But he was not attacking belief in god – indeed he was advocating it. Voltaire was not an atheist.

The same spirit of morality based on reason is evident in Voltaire's view of society. 'The sovereign who knows no laws but his own whim, who seizes the

property of his subjects, and who then enlists them to seize that of his neighbours is called a tyrant,' and Voltaire adds, again with tongue in cheek, 'There are no such tyrants in Europe.'⁵ But these laws, which the sovereign must obey, are a shaky foundation for society. Voltaire gives some historical examples of irrational laws, and adds some fictional experiences of his own, and concludes: 'Those little adventures led me to make fine and profound reflections about the laws, and I saw that they are like our clothes: I had to wear a dolman in Constantinople and a jacket in Paris. If all human laws are conventions, I said, we must make the best of them.'⁶ But the overriding law is tolerance: 'What is toleration? It is the prerogative of humanity. We are all steeped in weaknesses and errors: let us forgive one another's follies, it is the first law of nature.'⁷ The failure of tolerance can have appalling consequences, and Voltaire added an article on torture to a later edition of the *Dictionnaire* to publicise the case of La Barre, another victim of injustice whom he championed. 'When the chevalier de La Barre, a very intelligent and promising young man, was convicted of singing impious songs and even of passing a procession of Capuchins without taking his hat off, the judges of Abbeville ordered not only that his tongue be torn out, his hand cut off, and his body burned on a slow fire, but they also put him to the torture, to discover exactly how many songs he had sung, and how many processions he had watched with his hat on.'⁸

One might have expected Voltaire's attitude to the Greeks under Turkish rule to be as clear cut as on other topics. The Sultan by his definition was a tyrant, and in 1771 Voltaire had published – and Voûlgaris had translated into Greek – *Le Tocsin des Rois aux Souverains de l'Europe*, calling on the powers of Europe to expel the Turks and liberate the Greeks and their other subjects. But Voltaire's opinions on Greece were ambivalent and shifting, as is clear from his correspondence with Catherine the Great at the time of the Orlov revolt.

For Voltaire, ancient Greece was a golden age. 'Beautiful architecture, perfected sculpture, painting, good music, true poetry, even philosophy itself – even though unformed and obscure, all this came to nations only through the Greeks.'⁹ Their religion, though full of superstitious absurdities, was without dogmas and therefore humane and tolerant. But Byzantium brought Christianity and a Church that was the enemy of reason and justice. The Turkish rule that followed denied the Greeks their rights, though Voltaire thought the Greek people had a tolerably good life: 'The Greek families subsist in their country, debased, despised, but in peace: they pay only a light tribute, they engage in commerce and cultivate the land.'¹⁰ His main objections to the Turks were that they were barbarous, knowing neither how to read nor how to write, dance or sing, and that they were lording it over the land trodden by the heroes of ancient Greece – Miltiades, Leonidas, Alexander, Xenophon – and its thinkers – Plato, Sophocles, Demosthenes.

Voltaire saw the Orlov revolt as a prelude not to an independent Greece but

to a Greece enjoying law and justice under Catherine's enlightened despotism. 'Your Majesty', he wrote to her, 'will put on again her legislator's clothes after having cast off her Amazon's dress.'¹¹ As the Orlov revolt faltered Voltaire urged Catherine not to abandon 'these poor Greeks', but when it collapsed he followed the opinion of Catherine and her commanders on the spot that the Greeks were to blame, writing to Catherine that 'the Greeks are unworthy of the liberty they would have recovered if they had the courage to follow you.' By 1773, three years after the end of the revolt, Voltaire's enthusiasm for Greek regeneration had evaporated, and he wrote 'I give up my good hopes of seeing the Mohametans chased from Europe, and eloquence, poetry, painting, sculpture, reborn in Athens.'¹²

'Voltairean' or 'Voltaire-thinker' or simply the name of Voltaire became the symbolic targets of those Greeks who resisted the Enlightenment. Even some of those initially receptive to Enlightenment ideas turned against him. Voûlgaris in his younger years had praised Voltaire's 'surpassing reputation as a thinker'. In his fifties he was more doubtful, writing that 'Voltaire is always Voltaire, mixing the good and the bad in his works, and combining what should be accepted and praised with what deserves rejection and blame.' By his seventies, now a retired bishop living in a monastery, his change of heart was complete, and in 1790 he condemned Voltaire as 'one of the great and famous names for impiety'.¹³

In virtually every year of the 1790s and early 1800s a pamphlet or other publication appeared that attacked the Enlightenment in general and Voltaire in particular. They might simply pour scorn on Voltaire, for example an attack on a supporter of Voltaire that begins: 'Look at this strange miracle! Look at this monstrous novelty! Here is a little man rotten with desire to support the dogmas of Voltaire.'¹⁴ In the use of mockery the writer was clearly no match for Voltaire himself. Other writers simply used crude invective. One characterised Voltaire, in a string of insulting compound adjectives, as a wholly impure, extreme atheist, to be spat at, thrice cursed, hated by God, lecherous and mad. Another accused Voltaire, a man of decently restrained appetites, not only of living in debauchery and being a lascivious man of violent passions, but also of promoting dissolute behaviour in others. The writer asked why people followed Voltaire, and answered 'Because his philosophy is profitable to the indulgence of the belly and those parts under the belly.'¹⁵

Other criticisms were more measured. The ideas of the Enlightenment were regarded, with justice, as weakening attachment to the Orthodox Church, and a phanariot in Constantinople derided in verse this tendency among the city's sophisticated young Greeks:

Our youths are full of French ideas and atheistic dogmas,
They say 'We like French novelettes, but other books are boring.'
So now the young have little time for churches, prayers and fasting,
And praise Voltaire and Mirabeau although they've never read them.¹⁶

Other writers accepted that followers of Voltaire were theists and not atheists, but argued that theists did not believe that God intervened in the affairs of the world, and so theism and atheism were in effect the same thing. A further objection to the Enlightenment was that it looked for proofs of faith, but faith was not a matter of proof, like geometry. Finally, one of the most powerful critics of the followers of the Enlightenment summarised his three objections to them: they were lovers of wisdom rather than lovers of Christ, they were lovers of men rather than lovers of God, and earth centred rather than heaven centred.

The author of these last comments was Athanásios Pários (1725–1813), one of the most vocal upholders of the traditional Church. Pários had been head of the school on Mt Athos after the departure of Voúlgaris, and spent the last 25 years of his life as head of the school on Chíos. He became one of the leading spokesmen for the movement known as the *kollivádhes*, which had originated on Mt Athos in 1774, during Pários' time there. The movement began from a debate over the correct day for memorial services for the dead, at which a confection of boiled wheat and sugar (*kólliva*) was distributed – hence the movement's name. The monks of the hermitage of St Anne decided to hold memorials for the dead on a Sunday, instead of the traditional Saturday, and the *kollivádhes* backed the old practice. Their support for tradition was soon extended into other areas such as favouring frequent participation in the communion service, strict adherence to time-honoured church rituals, and of course opposition to Enlightenment ideas. They called for a return to the beliefs of the early Church, and in 1782 published in Venice the *Philokalía* (Love of Beauty), a 1,200-page collection of the writings of 38 of the early Church fathers on the theory and practice of prayer. The *Philokalía* was one of the few Greek publications from this period to have a more lasting influence. Republished after a long interval in the 1970s, it is credited with stimulating the revival of Greek monasticism in the late twentieth century.

Pários' first writings in the early 1790s were attacks on Koraís and the French Revolution. In 1798 appeared the *Christian Apology*, anonymous but almost certainly written by Pários. This was one of the first publications from the patriarchate's newly established printing press. The Church had realised, perhaps belatedly, that they needed their own printing facility to counter the ideas disseminated by the presses of Europe. The first edition of the *Christian Apology* of 1798 concentrated on condemning the French Revolution, and later editions in 1800 and 1805 widened the attack with denunciations of the Enlightenment and a vigorous defence of traditional religion.

Pários' most celebrated work was his *Response*, published in Trieste in 1802. Its extended title summarises Pários' views: 'Response to the phrenetic zeal of the philosophers who come from Europe; exposing the vanity and folly of their lamentable efforts exerted upon our Race and teaching what is the real and true philosophy. To which is added a salutary admonition to those who

recklessly send their sons to Europe on business.’¹⁷ The only element to be added is Pários’ rejection of the ancient Greek philosophers, in total opposition to Koraís. Pários was in a difficulty here. He could hardly condemn their ideas wholesale since the traditional Church that he championed also upheld the teaching of Aristotle, so Pários confined himself, not very convincingly, to a condemnation of their supposedly immoral lives.

As the ideological debate continued the Church began to speak with its own voice rather than through its supporters. In 1793 the patriarch Neóphitos VII published an encyclical which thundered that ‘the malign and misanthropic devil has devised in our time, as instruments of total impiety and atheism, the Voltaires.’¹⁸ This was followed by the *Paternal Exhortation* of 1798 issued by the current patriarch Grigórios V. It was presented as a statement by Ánthimos the patriarch of Jerusalem, but Ánthimos was on his death bed and the author may well have been Pários or even Grigórios himself. The *Paternal Exhortation* rejected Rousseau’s theory of man’s primitive state of nature, and reasserted the view that man was expelled by God from the Biblical paradise because of sin, and would be readmitted to it in the next life only after enduring the tribulations and resisting the temptations of this one. The devil, responsible for all temptations, had ‘devised another artifice and pre-eminent deception, namely the much vaunted system of liberty’, but the only true liberty was ‘to live according to divine and human laws’. Therefore the Christian flock was enjoined to ‘guard steadfastly your ancestral faith and, as followers of Jesus Christ, resolutely give your obedience to the civil government’.¹⁹ So religious belief was explicitly linked to submission to Turkish rule.

The *Paternal Exhortation* drew a forceful reply from Koraís, which he entitled the *Brotherly Exhortation*, and in which he proclaimed ‘the inalienable right of the oppressed to seek every means to throw off the yoke of tyranny’. It was in 1798 that Rígas died, and in a telling contrast Koraís pointed out that just as the *Paternal Exhortation* was being written Rígas and his followers were being martyred: ‘Perhaps at that very moment the knife of the executioner was descending on their sacred heads, their noble Greek blood was flowing from their veins, and their spirits were rising up to join the blessed souls of all who had died for freedom.’²⁰

In 1819 came the encyclical, by Grigórios, now patriarch again after an interval, entitled *Enlightenment as the Handmaid of Irreligion*, which attacked Enlightenment thinking as a whole. What is the point, asked the patriarch, of the young learning about ‘numbers, and algebra, and cubes and cube roots and atoms and vacuums and whirlpools and other monstrous things if, as a consequence, they are ignorant in the things of religion, injurious to the state, false patriots and unworthy of their ancestral calling’.²¹

Two years later the first moves of the Greek rising brought even stronger patriarchal support for the established government and condemnation of those who opposed it. In early March 1821 Alexander Ipsilántis, a Greek officer in

the Russian army, led a mixed force of Greeks and Russians from southern Russia into the Danubian principality of Moldavia to raise revolt against the Turks. Grigórios immediately issued an anathema against the revolt, signed by himself and 22 bishops. The anathema specifically named Ipsilántis, and was in savage terms. The powers that be were ordained by God, it declared, and whoever objected to this empire, which was vouchsafed to them by God, rebelled against God's command. Ipsilántis and his supporters were therefore guilty of 'a foul, impious and foolish work', which had provoked 'the exasperation of our benevolent powerful empire against our compatriots and fellow subjects, hastening to bring common and general ruin on the whole nation'. All Church and secular leaders were to shun the rebels and do all they could to undermine the rebellion. As for the rebels themselves, 'may they be excommunicated and be cursed and be not forgiven and be anathematised after death and suffer for all eternity.'²²

It would be easy to regard Grigórios and his supporters as simply obscurantist in their opposition to Enlightenment ideas, but one should remember the circumstances of the time. The *Paternal Exhortation* denouncing liberty was issued in 1798, nine years after the storming of the Bastille and the symbolic start of the French Revolution. That revolution was seen as the child of Enlightenment thinking, and its slogan was headed by the word *Liberté*. The French Revolution was violently anti-religion and anti-Church; religion was rejected as superstition, churches were shut, all church property was taken over by the state, and priests denounced as enemies of the republic. In November 1793 the Paris Commune held the so-called Festival of the Goddess of Reason, a sort of drunken pop concert at which the people cavorted in priests' clothes and parodied religious processions. In the light of all this, to describe the Enlightenment as the handmaid of irreligion was a pretty reasonable view.

Grigórios might also be accused of servile submission to Ottoman rule, but the doctrine of the Christian's duty to obey authority was a very old one. St Paul made it absolutely clear in his Epistle to the Romans: 'Let every soul be subject unto higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.'²³ St Paul's doctrine, of course, applied to all higher powers, not just Christian ones – there were no Christian rulers in St Paul's day. The patriarch had gone further than St Paul in saying explicitly that Christians should obey the civil government whether it was just or not, but this doctrine too was an established one. In the sixteenth century Luther and Calvin had said the same thing and they were Church reformers, not Church diehards.

Aside from religious teaching, the patriarch had a secular reason for supporting Ottoman rule. This was the contract of 1453 between Mehmed the Conqueror and the then patriarch Yennádhios. By this contract, in essence, the Sultan guaranteed to the Greeks and other Christians freedom of religion, including education, and in return the patriarch guaranteed the good behaviour

of his flock. Whether written down or not, in practice this contract, by the time of the war of independence, had been observed by Ottoman rulers for nearly four centuries. What right had the patriarch to go back now on his side of the bargain?

Furthermore, there were severe penalties for the Greeks if they broke the contract. This had been shown by the bloodily suppressed Orlov revolt of 1770. So the patriarch's fear that a new revolt would, as he said, 'bring common and general ruin on the whole nation' was not just speculation. It was based on harsh and recent fact.

Grigórios could not have done more to condemn revolution and support the Turkish government, but this did not save him from Turkish retribution. On Easter Sunday 1821, only a month after the outbreak of rebellion in the Peloponnese, he was hanged on the Sultan's orders from the hasp on the central doors of the patriarchal palace. According to the account of the British Embassy chaplain, 'Grigórios' person, attenuated by abstinence and emaciated by age, had not weight sufficient to cause immediate death. He continued for a long time in pain, which no friendly hand dared to abridge, and the darkness of night came on before his last convulsions were over.'²⁴

The Ottoman authorities gave their reasons for executing Grigórios in the document of some 500 words that was attached, as was customary, to the hanging corpse. It was impossible, said the statement, to regard the patriarch as uninvolved in the revolution; to all appearances he was a secret participant in it; in fact he was the prime cause of the disturbances, bringing harm to the government and the imminent total destruction of the Greek people. Hence his execution. But no evidence was offered to substantiate the progression from 'not uninvolved' in the revolution to 'secret participant' to 'prime cause', nor was any ever found. The most likely interpretation is that the execution of Grigórios was a demonstration, prompted by the hawks among the Sultan's advisers, that the government would stop at nothing to crush the Greek rebellion, even the killing of the titular head of the Greek community.

Grigórios' denunciation of revolution apparently had no effect whatever on his Greek flock. Greek clergy, including bishops, played an active part in the war of independence, and there seems to be no recorded instance of any Greek refusing to take part in the revolution because the patriarch had forbidden it. The only result of his stance was that the patriarchate found its links with the Greek people severed, and in 1833 one of the first acts of the government of newly independent Greece was to declare the Orthodox Church of Greece autonomous, independent of the patriarchate and under state control. Thus Grigórios, as head of the church, had failed to save his own life, failed to influence his flock and failed to preserve the influence of his office.

It could be argued that the Enlightenment, which the church had so strongly opposed, had also failed in Greece. The progressive teaching initiatives of the educators were naturally enough shelved during the war of independence and virtually forgotten thereafter. Of the two main revolutionaries, Rígas had

called for a different pan-Balkan rising, and Koraíís for a revolution at a different time and on a different basis. The failure of Enlightenment thinking to take root in Greece was, of course, partly because its representatives were mainly active outside Greece, in the foreign cities where education was more advanced and widespread and where newspapers and books could be published. There was probably only one simple Enlightenment message reaching the Greeks in Greece: that revolution was possible. The unschooled brigand Theódhoros Kolokotrónis, later a military leader in the war of independence, put it succinctly: ‘The French Revolution and the doings of Napoleon opened the eyes of the world. The nations knew nothing before, and the people thought that kings were gods upon earth, and that they were bound to say that whatever they did was well done.’²⁵

Prelude to Revolution

In early 1806 an event occurred that was the worst possible augury for armed revolution: the expulsion of the brigand bands of klephts from the Peloponnese. At the end of the previous year a firman from the Sultan reached the Turkish authorities in the Peloponnese ordering that all klephts should be apprehended and brought to justice. The firman was accompanied by a formal epistle from the patriarch Kallínikos IV which reinforced the Sultan's order. The epistle emphasised the duty of the Greek civil leaders to hand over klephts in their area, and accused them of having previously been in league with the klephts. The patriarch condemned any who failed to support the Turks against the klephts, while those who did give support were offered remission of sins.

The attack on the klephts began in early January 1806, and for the next three months the Turkish troops harried the klephts all over the central and southern Peloponnese. One of the leading klephts was Theódhoros Kolokotrónis, and he gives a detailed account of these three months in his memoirs. The bands of klephts were constantly on the move, unable to retreat for safety to the mountains because these were covered with winter snow. The Turks had large numbers of troops – 2,000 in one operation, says Kolokotrónis – but the klepht bands were small and split into even smaller groups; Kolokotrónis' band was initially 100, later reduced to 60 and then to 20, and finally consisted only of Kolokotrónis and two others.

They were constantly short of ammunition and bread. Sometimes these were provided by Greek supporters, but as often refused. At the village of Vérvena south of Tripolis Kolokotrónis demanded supplies, the villagers refused – 'We've got powder and shot for you,' they said ironically – and Kolokotrónis sacked the place. There were many inducements for the Greek villagers not to support the klephts. If they were suspected of doing so they could be seized, tortured and executed. Villagers were promised armed protection if they killed Kolokotrónis but armed attack if they did not. By the end there was a huge reward for capturing Kolokotrónis alive. Even Kolokotrónis' old friend Dhourámis, whose son was betrothed to Kolokotrónis' daughter, succumbed to the lure of the bounty, trying unsuccessfully to drug Kolokotrónis' wine with opium before handing him over.

Finally, just before Easter 1806, Kolokotrónis got away by boat to Zákynthos, then under Russian control. After the British took over the island three years later Kolokotrónis served in the Duke of York's Greek Light Infantry, waiting and preparing to return to the Peloponnese, which he did a few months before the revolution began in 1821.

The events of early 1806 could only be discouraging to any who looked forward to Greek liberation from the Turks. The expulsion of klephts from the Peloponnese was of course far from total or permanent. An estimated 300 to 400 klephts had been killed, others had fled and nine or so bands dispersed, but other bands survived, new bands were formed, and by 1821 klephts were again active in the Peloponnese. Nevertheless 1806 had shown that the klephts could not withstand a determined Turkish attack; that their patriarch backed the Turks against them; that their fellow Greeks could be prevented, by a combination of Turkish terrorising and inducements, from supporting them; and perhaps worst of all that a member of a klepht's own family might betray him for money. The klephts were the only armed force on which the Greeks could call. If the klephts could be so quickly defeated, there seemed little hope of a successful armed revolution.

However, there were many changes in the course of the years between 1806 and 1821. One was the steadily increasing economic pressure on the Greek population and the resulting resentment. Though official poll tax rates remained much the same, the tax farmers who had bought the rights of collection would arbitrarily increase the amounts due, in Arkadhía for example by over a quarter, and elsewhere by nearly half. There were other inequities because total poll taxes for a district were based on its population, and the population records were not kept up to date. Thus in Mistrás in the southern Peloponnese only 3,000 inhabitants had to pay an amount based on a population of 8,500, and on the island of Mílos the injustice was so glaring – under 3,000 paying for 16,000 – that the local Turkish governor felt obliged to contribute.

On top of illegal tax increases were the illegal and arbitrary exactions by Turkish higher officials. 'The Viziers (or Pashas) are the men who do the mischief,' wrote William Biddle, the young American who visited Greece in 1806. 'Coming hungry from Constantinople they enrich themselves by plundering the people who are absolutely at their mercy and whose complaints can never reach the Grand Seignior. They lay taxes without control and take every opportunity of making new exactions.'¹

Biddle witnessed the arrival in Livadhiá of the new Turkish pasha at the head of an imposing military procession. The pasha demanded that the townspeople provide quarters for his 200 to 300 followers and pay him 14,000 piastres. They protested that no previous pasha had asked more than 5,000 piastres, but the pasha 'declared if they did not bring the money immediately, he would set fire to the town and reminded them that their own heads were perfectly at his disposal'.² So they had to pay, and Biddle estimated that the

total cost to the town was 25,000 piastres, for the pasha's three-day stay.

A further burden on the Greek peasantry was the expansion of the form of rights over land known as chiftliks. The term literally means simply farm, but came to have two different connotations. One, which could be called the developed chiftlik, was the large estate, common elsewhere in Europe, consisting of wide plains producing a single crop such as grain or cotton, and close enough to a harbour to allow export for profit. These two requirements were met by only a few areas of Greece, such as Macedonia, Thessaly and the west coast of the Peloponnese. In the other form, the exploited chiftlik, the farming was still basically for subsistence, but a local official or landowner, Turk or Greek, simply usurped the right to impose dues on a group of villages, dues that inevitably became punitive.

The most notorious such usurper was Ali Pasha of Iánnina. He had plenty of scope: by 1807 he or his sons held under the Turks the governorships covering most of Greece, including the Peloponnese and much of Albania. Ali would first acquire some land in the area, legally or not, and then impose extraordinary exactions on the other villagers, driving them into debt and forcing them to accept his conditions as chiftlik-holder. 'Great terror of such a disaster' was how one traveller described the villagers' feelings at this prospect.³ By one count Ali Pasha and his sons eventually controlled 915 exploited chiftliks throughout Greece north of the Gulf of Corinth.

The background to these different forms of economic pressure on the Greeks was the deteriorating Ottoman economy. Since the late 1750s the Ottoman Empire had been engaged in a series of exhausting and expensive wars. Ottoman state revenues were far smaller than those of western European powers: Britain's revenues were seven times as great and France's nearly ten times. Furthermore the tax-farming system, though it saved the government the trouble and expense of collecting taxes through its own agents, was extremely costly to the state: by one estimate the government received only a fifth of the money collected on its behalf. The government's solution was to accelerate the debasement of the coinage, which as we have seen in Chapter 14 began in the sixteenth century. A result with direct impact on the Greeks was rapid inflation from the consequent increase in the money supply. Thus in Greece as a whole between 1800 and 1820 wages roughly doubled but prices rose much faster, especially the prices of basic provisions: in the same period cheese became five times more expensive and bread six times.⁴

William Leake, who travelled widely in Greece in the decades before the revolution, summarised the situation, writing from Lárissa:

The expression 'The world is ruined', so common all over Greece, is repeated here loudly, not less by the Turks than by the Greeks. They allude to the increasing poverty and to the excessive rise in the price of provisions, and every necessary of life within the last few years, which has been the ruin of many families. Its causes are the necessities of the Porte, the progressive debasement of the currency, the extortion of local governors, and, particularly in this part of the country, the oppressive government of Ali Pasha, his arbitrary demands, and the forced maintenance of his Albanian soldiers.⁵

The Ottoman government was thus steadily strangling, or allowing others to strangle, the geese that laid its golden eggs. But resentment against the rulers is not enough on its own to initiate a successful armed revolution; also required are organisation and opportunity.

The first rudimentary organisation to prepare for revolution was started in September 1814 by three expatriate Greeks, meeting in the Russian Black Sea port of Odessa. There they agreed to found a society, blandly named the *Philikí Etería* or Friendly Association, based on the Freemasons, with ‘the object of bringing about, in time, the liberation of the fatherland (*patrída*)’.⁶ Nikólaos Skouphás, regarded as first among equals of the trio, was born in 1779 in a village near Árta, and had worked at various times as an apothecary, a commercial secretary and a hatter. Emmanuel Xánthos, the eldest of the three, was born in 1772 in Pátmos, and by 1810, at the age of 38, had risen no higher than clerk to a merchant in Odessa. Two years later he set up in Constantinople, with three other merchants, a company to trade in olive oil, but the company failed. Athanásios Tsakálov, born in Iánnina in 1788, was the youngest and perhaps best educated of the three, had completed his studies in Paris only a few years earlier and had as yet no settled career. A hatter, a bankrupt and a recent ex-student: an improbable triumvirate to launch a national movement.

Elaborate rituals, owing much to Freemasonry, were devised for initiation into the different levels of the society, from illiterate Brothers up to the Supreme Council, the so-called Invisible Directorate. The initiation ceremonies included solemn oaths of secrecy – the tragic end of Rígas had shown how important secrecy was – and an obligation to contribute money. Nevertheless after three years the society seemed to be getting nowhere: far too few members and far too little money. The basic reason was that the founders had not been able to break into Greek society on Greek soil since they were themselves expatriates, and had not been able to break into Greek society abroad since they were of a lower class than the prosperous Greek merchants of the diaspora. When the three founders met in Constantinople at the end of 1817, the first time they had all been together in the same place since Odessa in 1814, Tsakálov was in favour of abandoning the plan and disbanding the society.

However, their discussions during the winter and spring of 1817–18 led to a radical reorganisation. They settled on a permanent headquarters for the society in Constantinople. They decided that they must send recruiting emissaries to Greece, so far largely untapped. To get more money they approached the wealthy banking family of Sékeris, from whom they raised much larger sums than they had ever raised before. Finally they agreed to find a distinguished figure to become the head of the society. Thus the leaders of the *Philikí Etería*, for all their air of shoestring amateurism, had carried out a reorganisation that could hardly have been bettered by a twenty-first-century

management consultant. They had set up a permanent headquarters, they had identified a new market and taken steps to exploit it, and they had a reliable source of funds. Finally, they were now starting the search for, as it were, a new chairman and chief executive.

This last initiative was entrusted to Xánthos, but it was another two years before he was successful. Meanwhile he was recruiting for the society in Greece, and claims in his memoirs that in 1818 he recruited perhaps the most distinguished of all Greeks, the patriarch Grigórios V. 'Having travelled to Mt Athos,' he wrote, 'I initiated the Patriarch Grigórios of blessed memory.'⁷ It is true that Grigórios was out of office from 1808 to the end of 1818, between his second and last patriarchate, and spent some of that time on Mt Athos, but nevertheless Xánthos' claim is very odd. No accusation of membership of the society was mentioned in the denunciation of Grigórios that was attached to his hanging corpse by the Turkish authorities, though perhaps they did not know of his alleged links to it. He is not included in any list of the society's members. Membership would have been completely at odds with his public pronouncements. Possibly Grigórios, temporarily out of touch with the politics of the day and with his mind on spiritual matters, expressed general support for the Philikí Etería because he assumed from its innocuous name that it was no more than a sort of benevolent society. Or possibly Xánthos simply invented the episode to give the society extra credibility.

At the end of January 1820 Xánthos arrived in St Petersburg on his mission to find a leader for the society. His target was Iánnis Kapodhístrias, who would be an ideal head if he could be persuaded to accept the post. He was a Greek born in Corfu, and as a young man had been prominent in the politics of the Ionian islands. He won the respect of the Russians during their occupation of the islands, was invited to join the Russian diplomatic service and in 1815 was appointed the Tsar's joint foreign minister. Kapodhístrias therefore not only had all the necessary personal and professional qualifications to lead the society, but also his acceptance would strongly indicate Russian support for the movement.

However, Xánthos knew that Kapodhístrias was unlikely to accept his offer, since Kapodhístrias had rebuffed two earlier appeals. But the approach to him had to be made; for Xánthos to bypass him would be an affront. Xánthos' best hope was that Kapodhístrias, if he again refused, would suggest an alternative candidate. At the end of two long meetings Kapodhístrias, who would not shift his position, told Xánthos that 'if the leaders of the society knew of other means to carry out their object, let them use them.'⁸ The suggestion of seeking 'other means' was near enough to what Xánthos had been angling for.

Xánthos had almost certainly had an alternative candidate in mind all along, for within weeks he had approached Alexander Ipsilántis. Ipsilántis was of Greek descent and during service in the Russian army had lost an arm. Members of his distinguished family had been Ottoman-appointed governors of Wallachia and Moldavia, he was a personal friend of both Kapodhístrias

and the Tsar, and his two brothers were already members of the Philikí Etería. Xánthos made sure that Ipsilántis was enthusiastically committed to the cause of Greek liberation before offering him the leadership, which Ipsilántis accepted without hesitation. In April 1820 a document, signed by Xánthos and Ipsilántis, appointed Ipsilántis as leader not of the Philikí Etería but of the Ellinikí Etería, the Greek Association. From its parochial beginnings the society was now within sight of becoming a national movement.

Ipsilántis resigned from the Russian army and spent the rest of 1820 and the early months of 1821 preparing for revolution. He travelled, often with Xánthos, throughout southern Russia and the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia, contacting sympathisers and raising and distributing money. Letters were also sent to the Greek leaders in the Peloponnese, and Kolokotrónis wrote that ‘twenty letters at least came to me from Ipsilántis, bidding me hold myself in readiness with all my people, as the day of the rising was fixed for 25 March.’⁹

The Philikí Etería prompted other preparations in Greece, and two meetings were particularly significant. One was a meeting in late January 1821, on the Ionian island of Levkás, of the military leaders of Roumeli, that is Greece north of the Gulf of Corinth. The meeting was set up on instructions from a representative of Ipsilántis as head of the Philikí Etería to the society’s local leader, in whose house the meeting took place. Levkás was an excellent place for such an assembly: it was British territory, but far enough from Corfu to avoid British watchfulness, and was conveniently close to Turkish territory, though not part of it, so that pretexts to lull Turkish suspicions were not needed.

Those gathered at Levkás were the three leading members of the local Philikí Etería, ten Roumeliot captains, and two further delegates: Ilías Mavromichális, representing his father Petrobey and the interests of the Peloponnese, and Iakoumákis Tombázis, representing the island of Hydra. Military decisions were taken: 25 March, the Festival of the Annunciation, was accepted as the date for a general rising, Ilías Mavromichális prudently emphasised to his northern colleagues the importance of holding passes to prevent Turkish forces reaching the Peloponnese, and each captain was instructed to raise the revolt in his own area. Finally, two superior commanders were appointed: for eastern Roumeli Odysseus Andhroútsos and for western Roumeli Iánnis Varnakióitis, both of whom had served in Ali Pasha’s forces. In the event Varnakióitis ‘showed the greatest reluctance to commence hostilities, but he was obliged to yield to the opinions of his colleagues, and of his own brother’,¹⁰ and eventually launched a successful attack on Agrínion, some twenty miles north of Mesolongi. The reputations of both Varnakióitis and Andhroútsos were later tainted by accusations of treachery, which Varnakióitis lived to see rebutted but Andhroútsos did not.

The other meeting, also held at the end of January 1821, was at Vóstitsa, modern Éyio, on the south shore of the Gulf of Corinth. Unlike Levkás this

was on Turkish territory, so for a gathering of prominent Greeks a pretext was needed: that they were meeting to settle a boundary dispute between two local monasteries. Here too the initiative came from a representative of the Philikí Etería, the firebrand and hectoring orator Papaphléssas. A letter from him to Xánthos is typical: ‘We need action! Talk is not work, and you do not become a man by sitting in clubs or by warming yourself at a stove. I say these things emphatically, since so much time has been wasted. The fault is yours. Finally, if the skies are dark now, they may be darker still in the future.’¹¹ At the Vóstitsa meeting Papaphléssas blustered in grandiose style, threatening that if the others were reluctant he would start the revolution himself with a band of 1,000 men from the Mani and another thousand from elsewhere, and warning that the Turks would then kill anyone who was not armed.

The meeting was attended by four bishops, other clergy, and many of the political leaders of the Peloponnese. The dominant figure was Bishop Yermanós of the see of Old Pátras some twenty miles west of Vóstitsa. He had held this office since 1806, had influence throughout Greece, and was a member of the Philikí Etería. He regarded Papaphléssas as an unmitigated rogue and charlatan, describing him in his memoirs as ‘a cheat and rotten through and through, thinking of nothing else but how to stir up trouble among the people so as to enrich himself by plunder’.¹²

The meeting spread over four days and Yermanós began by posing a string of highly pertinent questions:

- Is the whole Greek nation willing to rise in revolt, and will it follow our lead?
- What are the absolute necessities for the struggle? What do we need, what have we got, and where is the rest to come from?
- How and when should the rising begin? Should our attacks be simultaneous or one after another?
- Is a foreign power [meaning Russia] ready to help us? What form will any promised support take, and how firm is the promise?
- If any foreign power opposes us, what do we do?
- Who will lead the revolution in other parts of Greece?
- Will Greeks in Europe, especially the educated ones, join the struggle?
- If we fail to seize power, what then?
- If the Turks learn of our plans in advance, what action do we take?

The consensus of those at the meeting, as summarised by Yermanós, was clearly for caution. Most Greeks, they thought, still had no idea about the coming struggle. After the experience of the failed Orlov revolt 50 years before, to start the revolution in the Peloponnese without reliable support would be madness. The attitude of the European powers, especially Russia, was unknown, and virtually all supplies needed to make war were lacking. The conclusion was inescapable: the time was not yet ripe for revolution.

Some practical decisions flowed from this, mainly to do with disseminating and gathering information. Envoys were sent to tell the leaders of other regions in the Peloponnese about the result of the conference, and in particular

Petrobey Mavromichális, who was probably the most powerful figure of the Peloponnese not present at Vostítsa. Further messengers were sent to collect information, some to probe the intentions of the crucial naval islands Hydra and Spétses, others to Kapodhístrias to discover Russia's attitude, and to the exiled bishop of Árta, now in Pisa, for information about the other European powers.

Finally, a decision was taken on how to respond when the bishops and leaders of the Peloponnese were next summoned to Tripolis for the regular six-monthly meeting with the Ottoman authorities on taxation and public order. If they went, they might be seized as hostages, whereas if they refused they would arouse Turkish suspicions. On balance it was decided that they should make excuses not to attend, should announce that they were going to Constantinople to put their grievances to the Sultan, and should go into hiding in their own districts or in the islands until the situation became clearer.

Thanks to the initiatives of the Philikí Etería, an organisation to start the revolution was now in place. In many ways it was sketchy, and by no means all the Greek leading figures were committed to it. It might have come to nothing without the opportunity to put it into effect.

On a wider view the opportunity was offered by the ending of the Napoleonic wars. While these were in progress the European powers were wholly preoccupied with their own battles, and there was no possibility that any of them could be persuaded to support in any way – military, financial or diplomatic – a Greek struggle for independence. Of the philhellenes who after Napoleon's defeat came to Greece to support the rising many were former soldiers, serving till 1815 in their national armies but now unemployed. Furthermore, until peace came, philhellenes, whether ex-soldiers or idealists, would have found it very difficult to cross Europe and take ship for Greece from French ports, as hundreds did from Marseille in 1821 and 1822.

The ending of the Napoleonic wars was not an unmixed advantage for the Greeks. At the Congress of Vienna in 1815 the four victors over Napoleon – Britain, Russia, Austria and Prussia – formed the Quadruple Alliance. Three years later France, no longer seen as a threat, was added, making it a Quintuple Alliance. The primary aim of the alliance was to maintain the peace of Europe, which meant that the European powers, even if sympathetic to the Greeks, were not willing to support them in their attempt to overthrow their established Turkish government. Ultimately Britain, Russia and France did intervene, but in the early years of the rising it was individual philhellenes and not governments who came to the aid of Greece.

The international situation in 1821 therefore offered a generalised opportunity that was at least in some ways promising for the Greeks. But a more specific opportunity for a successful rising was needed. This was to be by the diversion of Turkish troops from Greece, and Ipsilántis aimed to achieve this by leading a force from Russia to raise rebellion against the Turks in Moldavia and Wallachia. One of the reasons for starting the revolt there

was, says Xánthos, ‘in order to attract all the attention and forces of the enemy to the Danubian regions, so that the Greek lands should remain with only small enemy forces’.¹³ There were other reasons for Ipsilántis to change his original plan of taking his forces to the Peloponnese to start the rising there, not least the difficulty of shipping them from the Black Sea to Greece and passing through the Bosphorus within sight of the Sultan’s palace. But if Ipsilántis had succeeded in diverting Turkish forces to the Danube it would have been a great help to the Greeks.

But Ipsilántis’ expedition achieved nothing. In early March 1821 he and his troops crossed from Russia into Moldavia and by early April had reached Bucharest. He had met little opposition so far, but also had attracted little support: most of the local leaders were interested in carving out territory for themselves rather than backing Ipsilántis, and the people hated Ipsilántis’ troops who, being short of supplies, were plundering the country. The Turkish troops already stationed in the fortresses along the Danube were more than a match for Ipsilántis, and in the single direct engagement with the Turks the young Greeks of Ipsilántis’ 500-strong Sacred Battalion were cut to pieces in a battle on a muddy field in which 400 of them were killed. In June with a few companions Ipsilántis escaped northwards into Austrian territory, leaving his army to face the consequences of his failure, and in a final vindictive despatch blaming that failure on them. Ipsilántis was imprisoned at Munkács, then reputed to be one of the unhealthiest places in Hungary; he was freed in 1827 with his health broken and died in the following year. His expedition had done nothing to further the cause of revolution or to help the Greeks.

Turkish forces were in fact diverted in the crucial early months of 1821 by a quite different operation, one that had nothing to do with the *Philikí Etería*: the Turkish campaign to crush Ali Pasha of Iánnina. Ali, nominally the Turkish-appointed governor of the Iánnina area, with his massive and widespread landholdings and with his two sons as governors of other parts of Greece, had become virtually independent. Moreover he was in constant negotiations with the French, British and Russians, with whose help he might defy the Ottoman government and become independent in fact. In the summer of 1820 Sultan Mahmud II sent an army against him.

The Turks’ siege of Iánnina made slow progress, partly because the army was so badly organised and poorly provisioned and partly because it had an incompetent general. In January 1821 this general was dismissed and the Sultan appointed in his place Khurshid Pasha, the governor of the Peloponnese, who moved north to Iánnina, taking with him his best troops. Khurshid, energetic and capable, had taken up office only in the previous November, so had not had time to assess how serious were the indications of a Greek rising. He left behind as acting governor his deputy, described as ‘a young man of an arrogant disposition and no military experience’,¹⁴ who was not replaced by a more able governor until mid-May. Thus during the crucial early months when the Greek rising established itself there was no effective

Turkish control of the Peloponnese, and the best Turkish troops were elsewhere.

Moreover, the siege of Iánnina dragged on, the town was not taken until January 1822, and Ali was finally killed a month later. The Turkish forces assembled at Iánnina were estimated as at least 20,000 strong and in some accounts double that number, of whom only 10,000 could be belatedly spared to fight the Greeks in the Peloponnese. Thus the diversion of Turkish forces that Ipsilántis had tried but failed to achieve was unintentionally created by Ali Pasha.

Every account of the early months of 1821 speaks of the atmosphere of feverish expectation combined with frightened apprehension that prevailed among both Turks and Greeks, especially in the Peloponnese. The Turks took steps to strengthen the coastal fortresses, and in Pátras the resident Turks took refuge in the town's citadel, taking their families and their property with them. On the Greek side the adherents of the Philikí Etería raised money and began to assemble war supplies, with the result that by March there was no powder or shot to be bought in the Pátras bazaar. News from the Danubian principalities wildly exaggerated Ipsilántis' achievements, and some thought that the coming revolution would be instantly successful: 'We shall go to bed in Turkey and wake up in Greece.'¹⁵ In the event the Greeks' war of independence lasted a decade, not the single night of the optimists.

1821 – The War of Independence

The war of independence is popularly supposed to have been started on 25 March 1821, a date still celebrated annually in Greece with apparently undiminished fervour. The scene was the monastery of Ayía Lávra in the northern Peloponnese, and the leading figure was Georgios Yermanós, bishop of Old Pátras, who had presided over the revolutionary meeting at Vóstitsa in January. According to the story Yermanós refused to attend the regular meeting of Greek leaders with the Turkish authorities and went instead to Ayía Lávra, where a crowd assembled that quickly swelled to 5,000, the same number as those to whom Christ preached in the desert. After a *Te Deum* Yermanós celebrated Mass and then addressed the assembled throng. Do not expect help from abroad, he told them. Their supreme principle must be to conquer or die, and he concluded: ‘Our whole history, and our whole future, are enshrined in the words religion, freedom and fatherland.’ He then released the faithful from their Lenten fast, declaring that since the life and religion of all were under threat they must have strength to defend the people and the altar.¹

Yermanós was in fact in that part of the Peloponnese at about that time, but the rest of this legend-creating account was pure invention, from the pen of the unreliable historian François Pouqueville. The revolution actually broke out sporadically in a number of different towns in the Peloponnese during late March 1821, but there were good reasons why Pouqueville’s story was adopted. A single defining date was needed for the later annual celebrations. To avoid disputes over primacy it was better not to place the start of the revolution in one particular town or attribute it to one of its most prominent leaders. Yermanós was a good choice as protagonist, being famous but not too famous. He had been a friend for many years of the patriarch Grigórios V, but he had sufficient status to reject the patriarch’s instruction to the Greeks to obey their rulers. He played an active part in the early days of the revolution but was not one of its most celebrated figures, and when he died in 1826 he was forgotten, wrote Thomas Gordon ‘as soon as the grave closed over him’.² That the story puts a bishop in centre-stage emphasises its main message, of the revolution’s link to religion: the date, which coincided with the Festival of the Annunciation, the setting at a monastery, the gathering of a Biblical 5,000, and religion ahead even of freedom and fatherland. In only one respect is

religion given second place: Church observances such as the Lenten fast must not stand in the way of the fight for freedom.

By the end of March 1821 the sparks of revolution had led to a general conflagration in the Peloponnese. In April the three main naval islands of Hydra, Spétses and Psará joined the rising, and on land it spread as far as northern Greece. The years of warfare that followed can perhaps be seen as a wave of three curves. First, an upward curve in the first three years from 1821, years mainly of Greek successes. Then a downward curve from 1824, of civil war and Greek reverses. Finally, after the battle of Navarino in 1827, a struggling upward curve of attempts to repair the ravages and dissensions of war, culminating in 1833 with the arrival of King Otho and the establishment of Greek independence.

The curve of Greek fortunes was at first decidedly upward. They had two initial aims. One was to capture the Turkish fortresses in the Peloponnese. Most were on the coast, and the Greeks took Monemvasía and Old and New Navarino in 1821, and Corinth and Navplion plus Athens in the following year. The Turks were now confined to Methóni and Koróni in the south and in the north Pátras with the nearby castles on either side of the mouth of the Gulf of Corinth. The one central Turkish stronghold was at Tripolis, the seat of Turkish government, and Kolokotrónis consistently urged the importance of taking it: if the Turks held it they could attack outward from the centre, without it they could attack only inward from the edge. Tripolis fell to the Greeks under Kolokotrónis' leadership, amid terrible scenes of slaughter and destruction, in October 1821. The other Greek military aim was to block the passage of Turkish troops to the Peloponnese from the north down either side of Roumeli. On the west side they achieved this by persistent skirmishing, and on the east side by a victory near Thermopylae, where in 480 BC Leonidas and his 300 Spartans heroically resisted the Persians under Xerxes.

In the war at sea both sides were initially on the defensive. One aim of Turkish naval strategy in 1821 was to provision their remaining coastal strongholds, and the other was to prevent other Aegean islands joining the revolution. In both operations they were harried with some success by ships from the three Greek naval islands, and the Greeks used fireships against them with devastating effect. But in 1822 the Turks became more aggressive in the Aegean, using excessive force to suppress revolt on Chíos. This left about a quarter of the island's population dead and nearly half taken into slavery, and was condemned by Britain's foreign secretary Castlereagh as 'the most ferocious and hateful barbarism'.³ The one consolation for the Greeks was the night attack by a combined fleet from Hydra, Spétses and Psará on the Turkish fleet anchored off the main harbour of Chíos. Greek fireships destroyed the kapitan pasha's flagship in a fireball that could be seen from Smyrna 50 miles away. The kapitan pasha was fatally injured and died next day, and nearly all on board his flagship were killed. In 1822 Turkish action on land also became more aggressive. They mounted a massive expedition under Dramali that

moved into the Peloponnese by the Corinth isthmus, but Dramali's troops were eventually forced to retreat. They were trapped and virtually destroyed in the narrow pass between Argos and Corinth by Greek forces again under Kolokotrónis.

Kolokotrónis had by now been recognised as overall leader of the Greek forces. 'It would be impossible', wrote Thomas Gordon, 'for a painter or novelist to trace a more romantic delineation of a robber chieftain, than the figure of Colocotroni presented; tall and athletic, with a profusion of black hair and expressive features, alternately lighted up with boisterous gaiety, or darkened by bursts of passion: among his soldiers he seemed born to command, having just the manners and bearing calculated to gain their confidence.'⁴ Kolokotrónis had no doubt of his own abilities: 'If Wellington had given me an army of forty thousand,' he wrote, 'I could have governed it, but if five hundred Greeks had been given to him to lead, he could not have governed them for an hour.'⁵

The outbreak of the Greek revolution created enormous interest abroad. Idealistic young men flocked to Marseille from as far north as Denmark to take ship for Greece. In the United States, prompted by an appeal from Koraís in Paris, large sums were raised for the Greeks, notably at a spectacular fundraising ball in New York, and food supplies were shipped to them. Russians, from the Tsar and his court to humble peasants, contributed money for the relief of refugees and the ransoming of captives – though not for military supplies. In Britain the London Greek Committee was actively involved in arranging two separate loans for the Greeks, raised from private investors, and British support for the Greek cause was dramatically emphasised by Byron's arrival in Mesolongi. But helpful and encouraging as these various initiatives were, Greece would ultimately need more direct help from foreign powers to achieve success.

The first days of 1822 saw the establishment of the first provisional national government of Greece by a national assembly near Epídhavros, east of Nafplion. It was essential for Greece to have a single national government. At the time of the Orlov revolt 50 years earlier there had been short-lived efforts to create such a national government. Now it was essential. If foreign powers were to provide support, diplomatic, financial or military, they would do so only for a government that could claim to represent the Greek people as a whole. Support would not be granted to the leader of a faction.

The national government was made up of a Senate, elected by the people, to pass laws, and an Executive, appointed by the national assembly, to run the government and prosecute the war. The first president of the Executive, in effect the national president, was Alexander Mavrokordhátos, a Greek with a thoroughly west European background and outlook. There could hardly have been a greater contrast than between Mavrokordhátos and Kolokotrónis. Samuel Howe described Mavrokordhátos:

His manners are perfectly easy and gentlemanlike, and though the first impression would be from

his extreme politeness and continual smiles that he was a good-natured silly fop, yet one soon sees from the keen inquisitive glances which involuntarily escape from him, that he is concealing, under an almost childish lightness of manner, a close and accurate study of his visitor. His friends ascribe every action to the most disinterested patriotism; but his enemies hesitate not to pronounce them all to have for their end his party or private interest. Here, as is often the case, truth lies between the two extremes.⁶

One of the aims of the westernisers in the government was to develop the small body of regular troops that already existed into a regular army, paid and controlled by the government and trained on western European lines. The military class thought otherwise, believing that irregular bands, operating as klephts had always done, were the best means of defeating the Turks.

Western military methods were soon put to the test. In the summer of 1822 Mavrokordhátos led north towards the Turkish military base at Ártá a mixed body of hastily trained regulars and philhellene volunteers from abroad. These were joined by some of the local captains and in mid-July, in a well-prepared defensive position at Péta within sight of Ártá, they faced attack from a much larger Turkish force. Though the western tactic of holding fire until the enemy was close was initially successful, the outcome was total defeat for the Greeks. This confirmed the captains' distrust of a regular army, and brought the end of widespread enthusiasm among foreign philhellenes to come and fight for the Greek cause.

However, for the Turks it was the major defeat of Dramali in 1822 rather than their lesser successes at Péta and at Chíos that determined their cautious strategy in 1823. To send another army into the Peloponnese from the north would be putting the burned hand back into the fire, and in the course of 1823 not a single additional Turkish soldier entered the Peloponnese. This lull brought Greek dissensions out into the open.

These dissensions became clear at the second national assembly, held near Navplion in April 1823, to restructure the government. At this second assembly, wrote a contemporary, 'Everything was irregular, disorderly and alarming, and it was as rowdy as the first was tranquil.'⁷ The underlying conflict was between the civilian politicians and the military leaders, and it became overt in clashes between the Senate, whose powers had been strengthened at the 1823 assembly, and the Executive.

By the end of the year there were two bodies claiming to be the government of Greece. One, dominated by the politicians and representing the Senate, was based at Kranídhí, south-east of Navplion, and the other, mainly composed of the military led by Kolokotrónis and representing the Executive, was at Tripolis. It was the Senate that had the better title to being the legal government and its opponents were in effect rebels.

The year 1824 was consumed in civil war between government and rebels, and the downward curve began. Byron reached Mesolongi in early January, and one of his projects was to attend a unifying congress of Greek leaders at Sálona near Delphi, but bad weather prevented him going. After little more than 100 days in Mesolongi Byron was dead, and we shall never know

whether a combination of his charm, his perspicacity and his money might have mitigated or even resolved the civil strife.

Money in fact reached the government in July 1824 from another source: the first English loan. Much of it was wasted. At the seat of government, wrote Thomas Gordon, there was 'a continual bustle, civil and military adventurers, scribes, and parasites flocking thither, heaping adulation on the men in office, and gaping to catch some drops of the golden shower that was at their disposal'.⁸ But this new money strengthened the government's hand, and in particular enabled it to induce captains in Roumeli to come to the Peloponnese in its support. By the beginning of 1825 the government was victorious and Kolokotrónis, with other leaders of the rebels, was in prison on Hydra.

In 1824, while the Greeks were racked by internal conflict, the Turks had devised a much more coherent strategy. The Sultan called on the aid of his most powerful viceroy Mehmed Ali, pasha of Egypt, who in a twenty-year reform programme had transformed his country, in particular by the creation of an army and navy on European lines, trained by foreign military experts, particularly from France. The strategy was for Egyptian forces to destroy the three Greek naval islands of Hydra, Spétses and Psará and then, secure from attack by them, to invade the Peloponnese by sea from the south. The inducement to the Egyptians was that Mehmed Ali's son Ibrahim, who was to lead the expedition, would be given the pashalik of the Peloponnese – once he had conquered it.

The Egyptian fleet began this operation in the summer of 1824, and successfully took the smallest of the naval islands, Psará, but harassment by Greek ships prevented them doing more, and the onset of winter drove them back to Alexandria, where they intended to wait for spring before resuming operations. But this plan was brought forward: a French officer advised Ibrahim to forget about Hydra and Spétses for the moment, and not to wait for the spring. If Ibrahim crossed to the Peloponnese in the winter the winds would be too strong for the lighter Greek ships but would give his own larger vessels better manoeuvrability than in summer calms. Also the Greeks would not be expecting a winter invasion. Ibrahim took the advice.

Thus at the end of February 1825 the first contingent of Ibrahim's troops landed at Methóni, and the downward curve of the Greeks' fortunes became steeper. The invasion did surprise the Greeks, who had made no preparations to resist it, and in any case they despised the Egyptians: 'We will dig their graves with their own bayonets,'⁹ said the Greek soldiers. Greek confidence was wildly misplaced. By the end of May Ibrahim was master of the fortresses of Methóni, Koróni and Old and New Navarino, and by the end of 1825 of all the major towns of the Peloponnese except Navplion and the rocky stronghold of Monemvasía. Kolokotrónis, released from prison and appointed commander-in-chief of the Greek forces, could do little more than skirmish with Ibrahim's troops on land. At sea a fleet from Hydra under Andhréas

Miaoulis used fireships to destroy seven Egyptian warships and a dozen other vessels at Methóni, and a Greek fleet under Konstantínos Kanáris even got into the Egyptians' home port of Alexandria but did little damage. Neither of these exploits interrupted Ibrahim's operations.

During 1826 and 1827 Turkish gains continued. The last siege of Mesolongi had been begun in April 1825 by Reshid Pasha with troops from Árta in the north. At the beginning of 1826, with the Greeks still holding out, Reshid was joined by Ibrahim with troops brought in from the Peloponnese, and in April 1826 their combined forces took the town after a final and dramatic exodus by the Greeks.

In June 1826 Reshid, after his success at Mesolongi, began a siege of Athens, which had been in Greek hands since 1822. Greek forces were assembled to support the beleaguered garrison of the Akropolis, under British commanders recently appointed in response to the crisis in Greek fortunes: General Sir Richard Church to command on land, and at sea Admiral Lord Thomas Cochrane. At Athens, Church and Cochrane were expected to coordinate not only their own actions on land and sea but also the operations of the Greek captains under their nominal command. In neither were they successful, and in May 1827 a massive but disorganised attack on the Turkish forces besieging Athens was heavily defeated. The Greek forces and their British commanders withdrew, and a month later the Akropolis garrison surrendered.

The Greek reaction to the Turkish successes following Ibrahim's invasion was twofold: to seek help from abroad, and to reform the system of government. One form of help from abroad was already on its way: a second English loan was floated in London in February 1825, the same month as Ibrahim's first landing in the Peloponnese. The money from this loan was not to be passed directly to the Greeks, to be wasted as much of the first loan money had been, but disbursed to help the Greek war effort by a board of control in London. The controllers used part of the loan to secure the services of Cochrane as commander of Greek naval forces, who demanded substantial pay for himself and a fleet of six expensive steamships to be built in England. One of these, after many engine breakdowns, reached Greece in September 1826, two more arrived later when the fighting was virtually over, one blew up during trials and two were never completed but left to rot in the Thames. The plan to build two frigates in the United States fared little better: in spite of help from the American government only one was completed, at a disastrously high cost.

The Greeks sought political as well as financial help from abroad. In September 1825 a Greek delegation to London presented to George Canning, now Britain's foreign secretary, an Act of Submission. This remarkable document stated; 'In virtue of the present act, the Greek nation (*éthnos*) places the sacred deposit of its liberty, independence, and political existence under the absolute protection of Great Britain.'¹⁰ Canning, of course, had to reject it.

It would have meant war with Turkey, a step that Canning was not yet ready to risk.

The reform of the Greek government was prompted by the realisation that the present system was too cumbersome for these dangerous times. In particular the Executive could not be effective because it was hobbled by its dependence on the Senate. In April 1826 both were abolished and replaced by two temporary bodies: an eleven-man Government Commission to conduct the war, its edicts to have the force of law, and a thirteen-strong Assembly Commission to negotiate with foreign powers. In April of the following year a further step was taken: under a new constitution Kapodhístrias was appointed first president of Greece, though his powers were designed to be tightly restricted by the Senate. Kapodhístrias did not reach Greece until early 1828, and meanwhile the president's duties were to be carried out by a three-man Vice-Presidential Commission, derisively described as a boy, a sailor and a cuckold.

Thus by the summer of 1827 the Greeks were in utter disarray. They were heavily defeated on land, and their fleets could achieve little. Money from abroad was controlled by others, and much of it was misspent, while political support from abroad was refused. Their own government was ineffective, and attempts to reform it made it worse. It was the low point in the downward curve of Greek fortunes. They were not going to win without outside help.

Appeals for such help had been made from the very beginning of the war. When the Greeks took the town of Kalamáta in March 1821 they immediately issued a call to the powers of Europe: 'Greece, our mother, was the lamp that illuminated you and she now reckons on your active philanthropy.'¹¹ Money arrived from abroad through the two English loans of 1824 and 1825, though in neither case was the money effectively used. Individual philhellenes came to Greece to support their cause, but governments were not prepared to move. The Quintuple Alliance of Britain, Russia, Austria, Prussia and France was committed to maintaining the peace of Europe, and in any case all of them had at the time peaceful if wary relations with Turkey.

The arbiters of Britain's relations with Greece from the beginning of the war of independence were Castlereagh, foreign secretary until his death in September 1822, and Canning, foreign secretary from then until April 1827, when he briefly became prime minister until his own death in August. The two are often contrasted in character, Castlereagh as a cold fish and Canning as a charmer, and in 1809 they had actually fought a duel with pistols at dawn on Putney Heath (Canning was wounded in the thigh, Castlereagh was unscathed). Their policies too are often seen as contrasting, Castlereagh as champion of authority and Canning as champion of liberty, but this is a mistake. Neither wanted to be dragged into decisions by the Quintuple Alliance, and Castlereagh explicitly rejected the idea that the alliance should support established authority, however much that authority was abused. Castlereagh was if anything more sympathetic than Canning to the Greeks.

‘Ought the Turkish yoke’, Castlereagh asked, ‘to be for ever riveted upon the necks of the suffering Greeks? It is impossible not to feel the appeal.’¹² Canning, however, wrote of the Greeks: ‘There is no denying they are the most rascally set.’¹³

What eventually tipped Canning into action on Greece was information he received in October 1825 about Ibrahim’s plans for the Peloponnese. It reached him in an unorthodox way, at a private meeting with Princess de Lieven, wife of the Russian ambassador to London, who had recently returned from St Petersburg. The information had been entrusted to her because it was too sensitive to be sent through normal government channels. Princess de Lieven brought Russia’s agreement to cooperate with Britain over Greece, in spite of their recent differences, and a startling revelation that in the Peloponnese Ibrahim intended, with the approval of the Sultan’s court, ‘to remove the whole Greek population, carrying them off into slavery in Egypt or elsewhere, and to re-people the country with Egyptians and others of the Mohammedan religion.’¹⁴ This would obviously lead to intervention by Russia on behalf of her fellow Orthodox, and Canning, besides being personally horrified by what he called the barbarisation project, was determined that Russia should not intervene alone. This could mean Russia becoming the new ruler of Greece, becoming dominant in the eastern Mediterranean, and even taking over a crumbling Ottoman Empire.

Canning now set about organising a joint intervention in Greece, with Russia and if possible with other members of the Quintuple Alliance. Austria refused to become involved, distant Prussia was little concerned with Greece, but after a year of patient diplomacy Canning won French agreement to participate with Britain and Russia. The three powers were acting completely independently of the Quintuple Alliance, whose influence as such was now at an end.

This agreement was formalised in the Treaty of London of 6 July 1827, by which time Canning had become prime minister. The treaty stated that an armistice would be proposed to both sides, and if either or both rejected it the three powers would intervene. The Greeks accepted it – they had nothing to lose – and the Turks predictably did not.

Intervention was in the hands of the admirals of the three signatory powers: Codrington for Britain, who was accepted as overall commander of the joint fleet, de Rigny for France and Heiden for Russia. The instructions to the admirals were hopelessly contradictory: they were to use force if necessary but without hostilities. Codrington eventually got clear advice from Britain’s minister at Constantinople, Stratford Canning, who in a letter of 1 September to Codrington told him that his orders were ‘ultimately to be enforced, if necessary, and when all other means are exhausted, by cannon shot’.¹⁵

On 20 October 1827 the British, French and Russian ships under Codrington moved into the Bay of Navarino to confront a combined Ottoman fleet of Egyptian, Turkish and Tunisian vessels. The battle began almost

accidentally: in the early afternoon the captain of a British frigate saw an enemy fireship being prepared and sent a lieutenant in a pinnace to persuade the fireship crew to desist, but shots from the fireship killed several of the pinnace crew and the engagement quickly became general. It had been started by what may have been an accident, but one that was almost bound to happen, given the tense nature of the confrontation.

Four hours later the battle ended in complete victory for Codrington's fleet, which had not lost a single ship and whose casualties were relatively light. But the Ottoman fleet had lost 60 of its 89 fighting ships, some 6,000 men killed and 4,000 wounded. Greek independence in some form was assured.

But the last and upward curve of Greek fortunes was still an enormously difficult struggle. Kapodhístrias landed at Navplion in January 1828 as Greece's first president. He immediately persuaded the Senate to suspend the Constitution for a period and grant him full powers, assisted only by a 27-member council appointed by himself. Kapodhístrias was a man of contradictions. Outwardly he was the smooth and sophisticated international diplomat, but the private man was very different: an ascetic bachelor, constantly in poor health, far from rich, and solitary despite his many acquaintances in the worlds of politics, literature and the arts. Under the suave exterior was a driven man, involving himself personally with every detail of his massive task. Greece was in a terrible state, and the list of his concerns is amazing: it included the planting of potatoes, the construction of ploughs, the enclosure of pigs, the naming of streets, the building of fortifications and schools and clock-towers, the ordering of printing presses, the revision of the calendar and the prayer book and the translation of textbooks. He also conducted the complicated negotiations with Britain, France and Russia over the extent of an independent Greece and the appointment of a king from abroad.

Inevitably Kapodhistrias made enemies, among those who like Koraíís believed that he should not have suspended the Constitution and resented his autocratic rule, and among the previous leaders of the revolution – many of whom he treated with contempt. In October 1831 he was assassinated as he entered church in Navplion for the Sunday service. So he did not live to see the fruition of his diplomatic efforts: the settlement of Greece's northern border on a line from Ártá to Vólos, and the arrival on a glorious spring morning in February 1833 of Otho of Bavaria as first King of independent Greece.

One Man's War – Nikólaos Kasomoúlis

Many of the memoirs of the war by Greek participants are by leading figures, and are mainly concerned with great military and political events. But some memoirs give an insight into what it was like to live through the war, and describe the sufferings and successes of daily life and show how some behaved well and some badly. One of the most revealing of these is the account by Nikólaos Kasomoúlis in his *Enthimímata Stratiotiká* (Military Reminiscences).

Kasomoúlis was born in 1797, the son of a prosperous merchant of Siátista in the far north-west of Greece. In 1820 his father sent him on business to Egypt, where he took the opportunity to visit the pyramids, and to Smyrna. There he became a member of the Philikí Etería, though somewhat doubtfully: 'All my fellow members seemed to me a feeble lot, in spite of their high aspirations.'¹ Nevertheless he enrolled his own father in the association.

In the first year of the war Kasomoúlis went to Argos and attached himself to Dhimítrios Ipsilántis, whose brother Alexander had been the first head of the Etería and was now a prisoner of the Austrians after his failure in the Danube principalities. Dhimítrios had come to Greece expecting to succeed his brother and lead the revolution, but his colleagues had other ideas. 'Day by day', wrote Kasomoúlis, 'they undermined him, and it was obvious that they wanted a different system of government.'²

In a remarkable anecdote Kasomoúlis describes a dinner given by Dhimítrios Ipsilántis after the fall of Tripolis to the Greeks in October 1821. The guests included, besides Greek leaders, some of the distinguished Turks captured at Tripolis and now being held for ransom, among them the bey of Corinth. The bey addressed the gathering in Greek, calling himself their friend even though he was a Turk, and advised them to cease their quarrels and accept a single leader. This mattered to the bey, of course, because he needed one person with whom to negotiate his ransom. Finally he thanked them for sparing his life and for treating him as their fellow countryman. The Greeks, says Kasomoúlis, recognised their mistake and thanked him for his advice. Thus we find not implacable hatred between Greeks and Turks but a Turk being entertained as an equal, and his advice, even if self-interested, being accepted by his captors and hosts.

Dhimítrios Ipsilántis then sent Kasomoúlis on a mission to encourage the

leaders of the revolt in the Mt Olympus region in the north-east. On the way Kasomoúlis shipped to Hydra four cannon taken from the ramparts of Tripolis, which was now in Greek hands. The cannon were carried the seven miles from Tripolis down the steep road to the harbour on makeshift carts, dragged by 150 Turkish prisoners who were not receiving the privileged treatment of their more important compatriots. When Kasomoúlis went on from Hydra to Náxos he was involved in what was effectively police work, pursuing a party of Cretans who had needlessly shot a Turkish prisoner in the foot, and a Greek villager who had murdered a man in a quarrel over a woman.

However, life had its diversions for the young Kasomoúlis. On Náxos he rapturously described a beautiful girl whom he greatly admired for looking after her widowed father and her brothers and sisters – but he assures us that his relations with women were platonic until he married in 1830. He also attended a big party held by the local notables. Kasomoúlis joined in the Greek dances, but some were European dances that he did not know, and he reluctantly sat them out. The whole night was spent in dancing, and in singing romantic and patriotic ballads.

Kasomoúlis reached the Olympus region in February 1822, but within weeks the rising there was effectively over. Even the monasteries of Mt Athos, seen as a potential centre for resistance, had reached agreement with the Turks. As Kasomoúlis prepared to leave, the *símantra*, the blocks of wood suspended outside the churches, were being beaten to the traditional Easter rhythm of ‘Tou Adhám, tou Adhám, tou Adhám – Adhám – Adhám’.

Kasomoúlis travelled south with a few companions, dependent for food and shelter on others and especially on monasteries. He describes his ascent to the Metéora monastery of Ayía Triádha, which is perched on one of the area’s precipitous needles of rock. He was by then exhausted from a week with little food or sleep, and when he saw what he had to climb his heart failed him, but he knew he had to do it. First there was a 300-foot fixed wooden ladder, and then after a small gap a hanging rope ladder. Kasomoúlis climbed the first part and then froze, not daring to launch himself into the air to grab the hanging section, but his guide, who had followed him, beat him on the feet and urged him on until he made the leap. After the hanging ladder there was a small ledge and then stone steps leading to the monastery, where a relieved Kasomoúlis was welcomed and given food by the abbot. That night, says Kasomoúlis, we slept as if in Paradise.³

The friendly abbot passed Kasomoúlis on to Nikólaos Stournáris, the captain of the nearby mountainous region of Aspropótamos, which lay across

the upper reaches of the Aspropótamos river, now called the Achel⁴oos. Kasomoúlis remained in Stournáris’ service for the next four years, in a trusted position combining secretary, aide de camp, emissary and adviser even on family matters. Kasomoúlis now became aware of the realities of the war as it was being fought in the central areas of Greece, and especially of its

confusions and uncertainties.

The Greek forces would not always fight. Kasomoúlis spent a whole night waiting for promised reinforcements with his increasingly disgruntled troops, only to learn next day that the reinforcements had gone home to look after their families. On another occasion most of Stournáris' forces melted away before a threatened Turkish attack, again to look after their families. Only captains had the resources to send their families for safety to the Ionian islands, and many – including Stournáris – did so. The rest had to make difficult choices between family and patriotism.

Discipline among the Greek troops was a recurring problem. The commonest breach was theft. Kasomoúlis' group had two mules, one of which was stolen by another group during the night. On another occasion troops stole all the sheep from a village near Mt Tsoumérka. The villagers complained to the captain, and Greeks fought Greeks in the battle to get the sheep back.

The most serious breach of discipline was rape, and though rare anyone found guilty of it was expelled from the troop, and might be hunted down and shot. But restraint in behaviour did not mean restraint in language. One captain, considered by others a windbag, urged the people of Náousa, in a rabble-rousing speech in the church, to advance on the Turks shouting 'I fuck your mother, I fuck your faith.'⁴ One of Stournáris' fellow captains, Georgios Karaískákis, irritated him with a crude joke, saying to Stournáris in front of his troops 'I hear your wife has been unfaithful to you in the Ionian islands so why don't you marry the daughter of your friend?' naming Stournáris' inveterate enemy, and opening a little leather case showed him a picture of the girl. Stournáris did not take it as a joke, and angrily hurled the picture in its case among the soldiers, yelling 'Anyone who wants her can have her. I shit on that tart.'⁵

Support for the Greek cause could not be taken for granted. One of Kasomoúlis' tasks as aide to Stournáris was to discover who in the area was pro-Greek, who pro-Turk, and who neutral. Villagers were divided in their loyalties, but the leading citizens of Tríkala were all on the side of the Turks. Some Greeks were simply out for plunder for themselves. The worst offenders were the troops from the mountainous area of Váltos, which adjoined the Aspropótamos region of Stournáris. In 1823 men from one Váltos family raided Aspropótamos and others quickly followed, plundering, raping and seizing everything – mules, farm animals, furniture, money and even the women's clothes. The captain of the Váltos region, Andhréas Ískos, sent troops to stop the mayhem, but they simply joined in, saying to the victims 'We'll be back next year.'⁶ Eventually Stournáris and other captains moved in and restored order, but they did not think they could bring charges against Ískos; this was not the time to start a civil war. But Stournáris was disgusted, cursing the day when he had taken over the Aspropótamos region and saying to Kasomoúlis 'You see, my boy, what allies we have in the fight for

freedom.’⁷

A captain was not only a military leader. He was in effect the governor of his area, his capitanlik, and the capitanliks broadly coincided with the armatoliks that in the past the captains had controlled as leaders of armatolí appointed by the Turks. In his capitanlik he alone was called captain rather than plain *kírios* or mister, and he alone made appointments. One captain devised a ceremony for his installation: he sat down on his cloak, which was laid out on the ground, his attendants wrapped it round him, and then lifted him three times into the air to volleys of gunfire and shouts of ‘Hail, hail, hail to our captain.’⁸ But other captains thought this ridiculous, and thereafter pointedly addressed him as *kírios* and not captain. Captains amassed great wealth. Stournáris as captain of the Aspropótamos area controlled some 120 villages with a total population of around 25,000, and benefited from their products, mainly coarse woollen cloth. Stournáris himself owned 7,000 to 8,000 head of sheep, goats, horses and cattle, and his family many more. It was vital for a captain to retain his area. Without it he had no status, no secure base, and no means of paying his troops, whether they were used for his own ends or in the Greek cause against the Turks.

One way for a captain to safeguard his position was to arrange a dynastic marriage with the family of another captain, but this was no straightforward matter. Stournáris was approached by a neighbouring captain, Yannákis Rángos, with the proposal that Rángos’ brother Konstantínos should marry Stournáris’ daughter Irene. After initial discussions between Kasomoúlis, as Stournáris’ emissary, and Rángos, the two principals met and Stournáris agreed to the idea, but reluctantly since he did not trust Rángos. They then discussed whether the engagement should be publicly announced, and Kasomoúlis advised them that their wives should be consulted first. However, the Rángos family began open celebrations of the alliance, forcing Stournáris to confirm or deny it.

Stournáris’ daughter Irene was now, for the first time, asked for her views, and replied firmly that she would rather die than marry Konstantínos Rángos, and her mother supported her. Stournáris was racked with indecision between alienating Rángos and overruling his wife and daughter, and took to his bed with the unromantic complaint of haemorrhoids, refusing to see any of the Rángos family. Eventually Kasomoúlis was charged with telling Rángos that the arrangement was off, for the good reason, suggested by Kasomoúlis, that if the couple married and were unhappy the two families would become enemies, not allies. Stournáris’ clumsy and indecisive negotiations had made relations with Rángos worse and not better, he had been successfully challenged by his wife and daughter – who were obviously quite ready to dispute the father’s authority – and incidentally he had forfeited some of the respect of Kasomoúlis, who ended his account of the affair with the ironic remark ‘Just look at the spirit of the man.’⁹

Kasomoúlis thought that the system of dynastic marriages would be a bar to

his own prospects. He and another of Stournáris' daughters, Photinís, had fallen in love, and she said to him light-heartedly 'We love each other, so why don't we get married, since we agree even on silly things?'¹⁰ Kasomoúlis could not answer, imagining that Photinís would have to marry into some powerful family. But it was to Photinís that Kasomoúlis was eventually married in 1830.

The other main step that a captain could take to safeguard his area was to make an arrangement, a *kapáki*, with the Turks. Both Stournáris and his fellow captain Karaískákis made such arrangements, by which they undertook not to support Greek forces or allow them to enter their districts, and the Turks undertook to keep out their own forces and gave the captains the right to collect the area's taxes. There were other less complete forms of cooperation with the enemy: mere withdrawal from the Greek camp, keeping open lines of communication with the enemy, or acquiescence in Turkish control if it was re-established. Some captains claimed that their submissions were only pretended, and that their object was to get provisions from the Turks or to lead them into a trap. Others pointed to the need to protect their people: 'I made a pretended *kapáki* with the Turks', said one, 'and brought my poor people back to their huts.'¹¹ It would be misleading to label such arrangements as collaboration, with that term's twentieth-century connotations of criminal and despicable treachery.

These various kinds of *kapáki* were common in Roumeli north of the Gulf of Corinth but virtually unknown in the Peloponnese, for a number of reasons. Turkish forces were far more active in Roumeli from their bases in Árta, Iánnina, Tríkala and Lárisa, whereas in the Peloponnese they were confined to a few coastal strongholds until the invasion from Egypt in 1825. Also loyalties in Roumeli were more fluid because of the involvement of Albanians, who might be fighting on either side and who had often been colleagues of Greek captains under Ali Pasha. Finally, the Peloponnese had one pre-eminent military leader in Kolokotrónis, as Roumeli did not, and from the start Kolokotrónis did not hesitate to use force to compel loyalty, telling his son Pános 'to burn the houses of those who did not rise'.¹²

In late 1823 Stournáris, with Karaískákis and other captains, withdrew to Mesolongi, since the Turks had ended their agreements by marching south through their territories on the way to a brief and unsuccessful siege of Mesolongi. Kasomoúlis went with them, and before he left had learned of the fate of his family. His father had fought at Náousa and had killed eighteen Turks but had been severely wounded. A Turkish bey who had been his friend looked after him, but he died some hours later. 'I could not hold back my tears', wrote Kasomoúlis, 'at the loss of such a noble and patriotic father.'¹³ The bey also kept the Kasomoúlis family in his care, against the demands of other Turks, offering to release them for ransom, which Kasomoúlis tried unsuccessfully to raise. One of his brothers, Mítros, managed to escape, went to Serbia and then Austria, and eventually rejoined the Greek cause.

At the end of November 1823 Kasomoúlis with Stournáris reached Mesolongi, and they were there during Byron's few months in the town in early 1824. Kasomoúlis refers only in passing to Byron's arrival, his attempts to control the Souliots and lead them in an attack on Návpaktos, and his illness, which made them fear for his life, but does not mention Byron's death and funeral ceremonies. Kasomoúlis was much more concerned with the new dissensions among the Greeks that he found in Mesolongi.

The governor of Mesolongi was Alexander Mavrokordhátos, who also held the post at that time of president of the Senate in the national government. Mavrokordhátos' continuing aim was to form a regular army, controlled and, crucially, paid by the national government, to replace the diverse irregular bands loyal only to their captains. Two methods in combination might achieve this. One was for Mavrokordhátos to keep the distribution of government money in his own hands, and the other was to make life difficult for any captain who came to an arrangement with the Turks.

Mavrokordhátos' stratagem of control by cash did not go smoothly. He was accused of channelling money to his favourites, and of giving money to new captains and not to the established ones as the government's military regulations required. On their side the captains cheated on numbers: 'Troops were counted in one band today and in another tomorrow, and you never found a soldier's name on the same captain's list for two days running.'¹⁴ Stournáris included in his lists men who were back in his home region of Aspropótamos. In any case the captains had their own sources of wealth, and though they competed fiercely for government money they were not wholly dependent upon it.

Eventually in December 1823 a commission of inquiry was set up to require Mavrokordhátos to submit accounts of the money he had received and how he had spent it. The commission was made up of five captains and five politicians, with Kasomoúlis as one of the official observers. At its first sitting there were violent disagreements, but the second sitting on the following day was calmer. Mavrokordhátos was called on to explain his handling of the money, but blandly answered that he had spent it all to serve the needs of the nation, and in any case that this was a matter for the national government and he would report only to them. Under pressure, which at one point reduced him to tears, Mavrokordhátos gave an outline of what he had received from the government, from Byron and from other sources, but would say nothing about how he had spent it, and his interrogators had to be content with that. As Kasomoúlis summarised it, 'The commission began in discord and ended without a result.'¹⁵

The other part of Mavrokordhátos' plan to control the captains was to discredit any who made agreements with the Turks. Many had done so, including supporters of Mavrokordhátos, but he made an example of Karaískákis, as one of the most conspicuous captains, by putting him on trial for treason in April 1824. Five judges were appointed, and five prosecutors,

including Stournáris, while Karaïskákis was left to speak for himself. There were thirteen charges against Karaïskákis. Three accused him of errors of omission in failing to stop Turkish attacks. Two concerned errors of commission in actively attacking Greek forces. The remaining eight related to arrangements with the Turks, such as secret communications, promising them his support and asking them to endorse his captaincy of the Ágrapha region. Three of the charges carried the death penalty.¹⁶

The first session of the court was held in the church of the Panayía, presided over by the bishop, even though he was one of the prosecutors. The public was excluded, and guards were placed at the doors. Karaïskákis, fearing assassination, entered with pistols and a row of cartridges in his belt. In spite of the seriousness of the occasion Karaïskákis lightened it with a characteristically earthy joke, ‘You’re 50 years old,’ said one of his accusers, ‘and you’re still in the habit of talking too much.’ ‘You’re 80,’ replied Karaïskákis, ‘and there’s a habit you and your wife still have.’¹⁷ Everyone laughed. Stournáris said ‘We must hear what he has to say,’ and received a grateful look from Karaïskákis.

The second and last day of the trial was held in open session in the house of one of the prosecutors, which was packed with Karaïskákis’ supporters. One of them probably saved him from the death penalty with his address to the court. ‘Fellow soldiers,’ he said in a commanding voice, ‘I see that you unjustly want to bathe your hands in the blood of the blameless Karaïskákis after these false allegations. If you condemn him to death his innocent blood will be on your heads and on your children’s.’¹⁸ Nevertheless Karaïskákis was found guilty, stripped of all his titles and condemned to exile as a traitor. All were forbidden to support or help him. The judgement was softened only by the concession that if he returned to true belief (*ta christianiká*) and support of his country he would be welcomed back. A summary of the decision was printed and posted on walls around the town.

As a result of the inquiry at the end of 1823 into Mavrokordhats’ handling of money and the trial of Karaïskákis in April 1824, two distinct factions had formed in Mesolongi: the supporters and the opponents of Mavrokordhátos. But the national government based in Navplion was now embroiled in the civil war that convulsed the Peloponnese from the end of 1823 to early 1825. Mavrokordhátos was recalled to Navplion to take up his new post as general secretary of the Executive. The government also called for the armed support of the Roumeli captains in the civil strife, and many answered the call, including Stournáris. Kasomoúlis joined Stournáris in Navplion, after a tearful parting from Photinís. Karaïskákis after his trial had been driven back to his region of Ágrapha by forces loyal to Mavrokordhátos, but he too led a body of troops to Navplion to support the government, making use of the offer of reconciliation in the trial verdict.

Within a few months Stournáris and Kasomoúlis were back in Mesolongi, which had now come under siege. In April 1825 a Turkish force of some

8,000 soldiers, with their labourers and other auxiliaries and commanded by Reshid Pasha, moved south from their base in Ártá to attack the town. In early April 1825, with the siege already imminent, Stournáris was appointed military commander of Mesolongi. Command of Mesolongi changed during the siege in response to the worsening situation: first there were two committees, one for military and the other for civilian matters, and later the two committees were combined and met daily, but Stournáris was a prominent member of these committees throughout the siege. In July he summoned Kasomoúlis to Mesolongi, where Kasomoúlis was joined by his brothers Mítros and Georgios, and all three were there to the end and took part in the final exodus.

Kasomoúlis quickly became aware of the realities of life under siege. When he first toured the ramparts he, unlike the already battle-hardened defenders, was the only one to duck when shots flew overhead. Kasomoúlis described these defenders: 'With their faces bloodstained and streaked with powder and their hair covered in dust, they looked as if they had come out of a furnace or rather from a slaughterhouse. I was deeply impressed by their cheerfulness, their laughter, their indifference to danger and their steadfastness.'¹⁹ If a man was wounded he was carried away by his friends, and his greatest disgrace was to weep or cry out or complain, or to say 'Ouch, my wound hurts.' Instead he just swore. Kasomoúlis thought the Mesolongi troops were like wild beasts during the fighting and like angels in its intervals. He also praised the courage of the Turks, who apart from not being besieged were suffering the same hardships as the Greeks and bearing them steadfastly and without complaint.

Kasomoúlis was involved in the fighting himself. While helping to defend the ramparts he had just stepped back to reload when an explosive shell was seen flying through the air towards him. A comrade shouted a warning but too late. The shell hit Kasomoúlis and made an inch-deep gash in his right shoulder, throwing him to the ground. Before he could get up the shell exploded and hurled him sideways. His comrades rushed to help him, but in the true spirit of the Mesolongi defenders he shook the earth off and shouted 'I'm all right, friends, you go back to your posts.'²⁰

Brave as the defenders were they were not all quite as angelic as in Kasomoúlis' description. Particularly troublesome were the troops from Soulí, the mountainous enclave just south of Iánnina. They were essential to the defence and their leaders, Nótis Bótsaris and Kítsos Tsavéllas, were two of the most prominent captains. The leader of a Souliot troop would, as so often before, claim pay for a hundred men when he had only ten and keep the surplus. The same ploy was used over rations. Later, when bread became desperately short, the Souliots sold their surplus to others at inflated prices, jeering at any who could not afford them. The Souliots were accused of every sort of wrongdoing, including stealing other men's wives. Nevertheless, of the three groups into which the population was divided for the exodus the Souliot

captains Bótsaris and Tsavéllas were in charge of two, and Tsavéllas was the last to leave.

Mesolongi depended for supplies of both food and ammunition on its lifeline by sea and through Mesolongi's shallow lagoon. Until the end of 1825, while Turkish efforts were concentrated on the landward side of Mesolongi, the Hydra fleet under Andhréas Miaoulis was able to bring in supplies from the Ionian islands, especially from Zákynthos, though the fleet regularly returned to Hydra to reprovision and secure the next month's pay. But from the beginning of 1826 the Turks switched their attack to the seaward side, progressively capturing the small islands in the lagoon, and Miaoulis' last supply drop was at the end of January. Kasomoúlis witnessed the Turkish attack on the lagoon island of Klísova only half a mile from Mesolongi. In response to the island's desperate appeal, supplies of ammunition and water were sent across from the town on one of Mesolongi's shallow-draught punts, poled by an oarsman and his young son. Before the punt reached the island the oarsman was killed. The boy rowed on, and was within a few yards of the shore when he too was shot dead. But the supplies were landed, and Kasomoúlis threw down his telescope in delight at their success.

Mesolongi also needed military help, and Karaískákis was their main hope. He had harried Reshid's lines of communication, which were from his base at Amphilochía, 40 miles north of Mesolongi, and he had made a successful attack on Amphilochía itself. Karaískákis was now encamped at Dhervékista a few miles east of Mesolongi but, as one Mesolongi captain put it, he had just sat there counting the distant cannon shots. When the date for the exodus was fixed the garrison sent to Karaískákis an impassioned plea to make a diversionary attack on the night: 'You are our comrades in arms and our friends. Whoever loves Christ and God and our country must come to our aid. If you do not help us you will surely see what will happen.'²¹

By February 1826 lack of food had become the most pressing problem for Mesolongi. The remaining supplies of flour and beans were collected and distributed equally to all, a cupful at a time. These were cooked with a bit of crabmeat, the only catch from the lagoon because the fish had been driven away by the gunfire. People now resorted to other sources of food: donkeys and mules, horses (only four captains, one of them Stournáris, kept theirs), dogs (said to be delicious), cats (within a few days of the first being eaten none was left), seaweed (boiled five times to remove the bitterness), and mice (if you were lucky enough to catch one). Even cases of cannibalism were reported. Such diets inevitably led to diseases, including mouth ulcers, arthritis and scurvy. Nevertheless the defenders of Mesolongi repeatedly refused offers of surrender on terms, some quite favourable, while the Turks outside the walls shouted 'Why are you sitting there, what are you waiting for, why don't you give in?'²²

The only alternative to surrender was mass exodus, and this was fixed for Saturday 22 April, the eve of Palm Sunday, and the supposed anniversary of

Christ raising Lazarus from the dead. The parallel was clear: Lazarus four days dead and restored to life, Greece four centuries oppressed and risen again. Portable wooden bridges were built to be placed over Mesolongi's defensive ditch, and the escapers were divided into three groups to cross in succession. Initially the moon was obscured by cloud and the first crossings were made without incident, but then the clouds cleared, the escapers were visible and vulnerable and confusion followed, some shouting 'Forward!' and others 'Back!' Karaïskákis' diversion never materialised. The Turkish commanders had learned of the planned exodus, and probably allowed it to happen. Mesolongi would then be theirs, and the refugees at the mercy of Turkish troops, especially cavalry, on the open plain. Of the 9,000 Greeks who left Mesolongi on that night some 4,000 were killed, 3,000 captured, mainly women and children, and only 2,000 escaped.

Kasomoúlis survived the exodus, as did his brother Georgios, but the other brother Mítros was killed. 'I last saw him', wrote the grieving Kasomoúlis, 'rushing forward with one hand shading his eyes and the other wielding his yataghan, and I never saw him again. His blood brothers were legion and he wanted everybody to be one. He longed to have the whole world as his friend and none as his enemy. He was just twenty years old.'²³ Stournáris too was among the dead.

Some survivors reached Karaïskákis' camp through appalling weather. They were gaunt, wrote Kasomoúlis, with pale and angry faces, their clothes bloodstained and bullet torn, their eyes reddened and half-closed from lack of sleep. They found Karaïskákis ill in bed, which perhaps partly excused his inactivity, for which he apologised. He provided food for them, but, abrasive as always, claimed that the 1,500 survivors he counted were all men and asked 'Why so many? Did the Turks kill only women?' The leader of the group was furious. 'We got our arses here through the gunfire without any help from you,' he replied. 'We have kept our word and are doing no more. We're going, and you can fight the Turks now.'²⁴

Karaïskákis did go on to fight the Turks. In December 1826 he defeated them in the snow-covered mountains round Aráchova, a few miles east of Delphi, and he played a major role in the unsuccessful attempt to drive the Turks back from Athens. In the last days of the Athens battle in May 1827 he was struck by a stray bullet and died the next day. Although his loyalty to the Greek cause was often suspect, he has since become revered as a symbol of Greece's liberation. Other nations too have their legendary heroes – Britain's Sir Francis Drake, for example – who pursued their own interests in parallel with serving their country.

Kasomoúlis' war was not over with the fall of Mesolongi, but its most exciting days probably were. For him the decisive moment of the war was the defeat of the Turks at Navarino by the combined British, Russian and French fleets in October 1827. Kasomoúlis was in Corinth when the news arrived, which was greeted with a thunderous celebratory cannonade. 'We did not

know what to do', wrote Kasomoúlis, 'apart from congratulating ourselves and giving praise and thanks to God. That was the first day on which our chains were cut. It was the day that had been long awaited by our fathers and forefathers, by those who died at Mesolongi, and by the people – the people who had never truly submitted.'²⁵

Some Conclusions

In September 2006 the Greek government introduced a new school history textbook for twelve-year-olds, covering Greek history from 1453 to the present. A furore over it erupted in the following spring. Church leaders, academics and right-wing politicians condemned the book in fierce public statements, and youths linked to an ultranationalist political group burned copies of it outside parliament in Síntagma Square.

The Church, led by the ailing but vigorous Archbishop Christódhoulos, objected that the book underrated the role of the Church in the Greek war of independence, that it even challenged 25 March as the date when the war started, that it questioned the existence of secret schools, and in general that the book enslaved youth. Some academics criticised the book because it did not mention Greek resistance to conversion to Islam, that it never described Turkish or Venetian rule as slavery, and that it described the *devshirme* as recruitment of the boys when it should have used the word kidnapping. The book was also vociferously denounced by the leader of the far-right political party.

The education minister Mariétta Yannákou battled back. ‘I believe in truth,’ she said, ‘in what really happened in history. We must not tell children fairy tales at school.’ She initially resisted calls for the book’s withdrawal, but in August 2007 accepted that it contained mistakes and inaccuracies, and said that a revised version would be used in schools from September.

This might seem like a straightforward confrontation between obscurantism and enlightenment, a repeat of the debates of the decades before the war of independence, but the background was now very different. In 1999 the foreign ministers of Greece and Turkey had signed an agreement to review their respective school textbooks for nationalist bias. The 2006 Greek book was one of this agreement’s first results, and its treatment of the destruction of Smyrna in 1922 was an example of the new approach that particularly angered the critics.

In 1922 at the end of the disastrous Greek invasion of Turkey, Greek troops fell back to Smyrna, which already had a large Greek and Armenian population. On 9 September Turkish forces entered the town, and four days later a fire began that raged for days, almost entirely destroying the Greek and Armenian quarters, though not the Turkish, and forcing into the sea many of

those at the harbour hoping for escape by boat. Turkish historians have blamed the Greeks or the Armenians for starting the fire, but it was probably lit by the Turks and there is overwhelming evidence that they fed it by first spraying houses with petrol and then setting fire to them. But all the textbook has to say of the event is: 'The Turkish army enters Smyrna. Thousands of Greeks crowd at the port and try to leave for Greece.'

This seems too bland even for twelve-year-olds, and the critics were surely right to object to it. It demonstrates the main difficulty of the textbook writers. If all Greek nationalist bias against Turks is to be removed, Turks cannot be blamed for anything, even if they are clearly responsible for it. History with false judgements is replaced by history containing no judgements at all. Nevertheless perhaps this is a stepping stone on the way to a history with valid and objective judgements.

Before that goal can be reached maybe a deeper shift in attitudes is needed: away from the idea of 'self' being defined in relation to some 'other' that is different or inferior or evil – of 'us' as opposed to 'them', or, in the jargon, identity versus alterity. This way of thinking goes back to the ancient Greeks who, as Paul Cartledge has argued, constructed their identities negatively by means of polarised oppositions of themselves to what they were not: Greek–barbarian, citizen–alien, free–slave and so on. He concludes that 'It was one of the less celebrated but none the less essential aspects of "the Greek achievement" to take this process of negative polarization to extremes.'¹ This legacy has been inherited by the western world as a whole and markedly by the Greeks in their view of the Turks, for better or worse, sustaining them through centuries of Turkish rule but blighting all their subsequent relations with the Turks.

The conclusion of the schoolbook story shows that the process of rewriting the old Greek histories still has some way to go. In the parliamentary elections of September 2007 Mariétta Yannákou, who had championed other radical and fiercely opposed educational reforms, lost her seat, gaining less than half the votes she had won in the previous election, and with it her post as education minister. Her successor immediately withdrew the textbook.

It is impossible to ignore this background to the writing of Greek history, but there is no need to be constrained by it. What then can be said about the centuries of Turkish and other foreign rule in Greece? Where, for both the foreign rulers and for the Greeks themselves, do praise and blame lie?

One of the continuing causes of Greek resentment against the Turks is the *devshirme* or child-collection, an incident of which is described at the opening of this book. The most appropriate word for it is conscription, rather than voluntary 'recruitment' or criminal 'kidnapping' – the terms debated in the textbook controversy. It can be argued, of course, that the *devshirme* was increasingly rare after about 1650 and ended altogether in the early 1700s, so the grudge is a very old one. It can also be argued that many of the conscripted boys achieved fame and fortune, rising as high as grand vizier,

and that sometimes parents volunteered their sons for the devshirme. But these arguments do not soften the harsh reality that for many if not most Greek families, in which ties of kinship have always been particularly strong, the removal of a son was a heartbreaking loss.

The devshirme faded out over time but taxation, another cause of Greek resentment became steadily more of a burden. It was resented because it was heavy and was arbitrary, and we have seen instances of both. It became heavier because of the deteriorating Ottoman economy and more arbitrary because central control of officials became weaker. Greeks and other non-Muslims paid a higher poll tax than Muslims, which was often cited as a cause of resentment, but on the other hand Muslims were liable for military service and non-Muslims were not. The balance was a reasonable one.

Was the taxation of the Greeks heavier and more arbitrary than for their counterparts in western European countries? Even if this assessment could be made it would not really be relevant. The Greeks, with very few exceptions, could not choose where to live and be taxed; they had to put up with what they had.

The Turks are also blamed by Greeks for failing to develop the country, and leaving little of value behind; some elegant bridges but no decent roads, some fountains but no major buildings except mosques and a few bazaars. This was one aspect of a general neglect of the Greek economy whose development was almost impossible when manufacture was regulated by official guilds and exports were government controlled. These complaints are valid, and from the time when the 1774 Treaty of Kutchuk-Kainardji opened the way for increased trading on land and sea Greek economic development was remarkable.

Greek revolts, which occurred for a variety of reasons over the centuries, were ruthlessly suppressed. Governments in western Europe, for example in Spain and France, could be just as savage, but again this is hardly relevant to a situation from which the Greeks had no escape; it matters little to a sufferer that others elsewhere may be suffering more. Some forms of Turkish retribution, such as impalement, were particularly horrible. This raises the question of how a historian should judge such matters: by the standards of his or her own day, or by the standards of the time. Either alone leads to absurdities: to blaming Genghis Khan for not complying with the Geneva conventions, or to treating impalement simply as part of Ottoman culture. The historian probably veers between the two approaches, guided by the light of some absolutes of justice and decency.

Against these darker aspects of Turkish rule can be set certain advantages for the Greeks. First, they were spared for much of the period from wars fought on their mainland territory. The original Turkish conquests of the fifteenth century had ended the turmoil of wars fought in Greece by the dying Byzantine Empire, and no further wars were fought on the Greek mainland until the invasion of Venice and her allies in 1684, their expulsion in 1715,

and the Orlov revolt of 1770.

Second, the Greeks were given religious freedom. This included not only freedom of worship but freedom, with only minor restrictions, to build churches. It was never Turkish policy to convert, forcibly or otherwise, Christians to Islam, and the preachings of the Church against apostasy were apparently against a largely exaggerated danger. Besides religious reasons there were strong social pressures on the Greeks to remain in the Orthodox Church, and the instances of conversion seem to have been for some personal benefit. Finally, with freedom of religion went freedom of education, which was left in the hands of the Church.

Greek religion was, paradoxically, more under threat from fellow Christians, the Venetians and other Italians, than from Muslims. In many of their territories the Venetians directed that all bishops should be Catholic, and elsewhere Jesuit missionaries often aggressively proselytised. This threat should not be overstated: both Catholic and Orthodox churches could be found in Cretan towns, congregations were often mixed, and help from Catholic and Orthodox priests was called on without distinction. Nevertheless, many Greeks welcomed the Turks when they replaced the Venetians because the Turks offered greater religious freedom, especially in permitting the appointment of Orthodox bishops.

The role of the Orthodox Church was central during the centuries of Turkish rule. As travellers to Greece noted, holy images were everywhere and religious ceremonies spontaneously practised – especially by sailors – and prayers for intercession, most often to the Mother of God, were the response to misfortune. When after early setbacks in the war of independence Kolokotrónis, the rough military leader, was alone and in despair, he tells us that he went into a little church, threw himself down and wept for Hellas. “Holy Virgin,” I cried, “help us now, that the Greeks may take heart once more.”² Religious belief was heartfelt and almost universal among the Greeks, and the Church achieved what it saw as its main purpose, that of sustaining the faith and worship of its flock.

In other areas the Church could have done more. Education, for which the Church had sole responsibility, was badly neglected, and efforts to improve it in response to Enlightenment ideas were consistently blocked by conservative diehards. The Church attitude to modernising the language of the New Testament was also unnecessarily restrictive. This attitude has been credited with preserving the Greek language, but the Church of England revisers of the prayer book in 1662, with their more flexible approach, enormously enriched the English language; they did not impoverish it, let alone destroy it.

A persistent weakness of the Church was the revolving door of the patriarchate, with patriarchs constantly losing office after a short reign only to return later, the same patriarch going in and out up to five times. The suggestion that all this was engineered by Turks wanting to maximise the number of payments on accession is unconvincing. It was the Holy Synod

who elected the patriarch, to be approved by the Sultan, and it is more likely that constant factional strife within the Holy Synod was the main cause of these frequent changes that so debilitated the Church.

One cannot speak of one role of the Church in the war of independence because its two parts played diametrically opposed roles. Bishops were deeply involved in planning the revolution, and bishops and lower clergy fought throughout the war. By contrast the patriarchate consistently condemned the revolution, often in the fiercest terms. This should not be seen as a despicable lack of patriotism: the patriarchs had respectable reasons for the line they took.

The Church, despite its shortcomings, clearly played a major part in sustaining the Greek people during the centuries of foreign rule and preserving their sense of themselves as special, with a distinguished ancestry and one day a bright future. The Church was, some say, the custodian of Greek national identity, though references to national identity in any context can be irritatingly imprecise. It is sometimes necessary to rewrite any statement about national identity without using the words 'national' or 'identity' to see what, if anything, the statement means. Religion was only one aspect of what it meant to be Greek, and a more complex picture is given by one of Greece's most distinguished modern poets, George Seferis.

Seferis' career and character were full of apparent contradictions. He was a diplomat who rose from lowly and unenthusiastic government service in the 1930s to become Greek ambassador to Britain. But he is best known as a poet and his verse is cerebral in tone but packed with memorable images. In 1963 he was awarded the Nobel prize for literature, the first Greek Nobel laureate of any kind.

He was a man of ideas, but claimed that he rejected the abstract for the concrete. 'My task', he said, 'is not with abstract ideas but to hear what the things of the world say to me,' and these things of the world were primarily Greek things – Greece's mountains and stones, the shore and its seashells, the sea itself, and above all the light of Greece that illuminates and suffuses them all.³ He also wrote metaphorically of light as the basis for optimism. 'Deep down', he wrote, 'I am a matter of light,'⁴ and the 'I' is all humanity. Perhaps at the back of Seferis' mind was the doctrine of Divine Light of the early Church fathers, who taught that he who participates in God's grace becomes the Light, and is united to the Light.

There were further seeming anomalies in Seferis' life. He was passionately Greek, but as a diplomat spent the greater part of his life abroad. He was born outside Greece in Smyrna, and lived there till he was fourteen, spending his summers in the nearby coastal village of Skala, and it was Skala, not any place in Greece, which he called his lost paradise. Near the end of his life in 1969, despite his diplomatic standing and his aversion from politics, he publicly denounced the military junta that had seized power in Greece two years earlier. His character too was complex. His friend Henry Miller

described him as a cross between bull and panther, and they met through a shared love of American negro jazz. So there were many sides to Seferis. He was both an intellectual and involved in public affairs; he was a patriot, often an expatriate one, but not a narrow nationalist; and he was deeply attached to the Greek people but well aware of their failings. He was thus uniquely placed to articulate what it means to be Greek

Seferis distinguished three elements of being Greek. One of these is a basically false one, which Seferis called *Ellinikótita*, usually translated as 'Greekness'. Seferis loathed it. He saw it as a derivative, like the 'Greekness' of the Athens Academy buildings, the work of a Danish architect in 1887, basically north European but with the superficial appearance of a classical temple. 'Greekness' was also false because it was narrowly nationalistic, like the petty authoritarianism of the so-called Third Greek Civilisation proclaimed by the Metaxas dictatorship of the 1930s. This 'Greekness' is just pseudo-Greekness.

The false 'Greekness' of *Ellinikótita* is opposed to the genuine Hellenism of *Ellinismós*. This Hellenism embraces everything of value in the Greek tradition, from ancient Greece through Byzantium to modern times. For Seferis it was a living tradition, continuous but constantly developing, not something fixed and rigid. It was the inheritance of all Greeks, not of the narrow Greek state, and Seferis found this genuine Hellenism in Cyprus, which had never been part of the Greek state. It was a tradition to which non-Greeks could contribute. Examples for Seferis were T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, in which he found an element of tragedy that could not but be moving to a Greek, and James Joyce's *Ulysses*, a classical Greek story retold in the wholly different frame of a day in the seedier parts of Dublin. And for Seferis Hellenism was even wider than that. It embraced the whole of humanity, embodying as it did the idea of human worth and freedom.

Seferis distinguished both *Ellinikótita* and *Ellinismós* from *Romiosíni*, which is something different again. It is today's reality of being Greek, and derives from the time when Greeks were part of the Ottoman millet-i-Rum, and a Greek was not *Éllinas* but *Romiós*. Patrick Leigh Fermor has written very engagingly about his view of this distinction. As he puts it, the word *Romiós* 'conjures up feelings of warmth, kinship and affection, of community of history, of solidarity in trouble, of sharing the same hazards and aspirations, of being in the same boat'. *Romiós* can also be partly derogatory. A Greek told Leigh Fermor that 'it reminds us of our dirty linen,'⁵ that is, the compromises, deviousness and downright dishonesty that became part of Greek life under foreign rule. In short, *Romiosíni* is everything that is real about being Greek, good or bad, source of pride or of sorrow. Seferis was clear that many things were wrong in Greece's history, and much of that could be laid at the door of Greeks themselves, not Greece's enemies. Nevertheless he wrote, towards the end of his life, 'But the Greek people has compensated us richly for all.'⁶

The prologue to this book quoted Gaetano Salvemini on how we should think about the past: 'Impartiality is a dream, honesty is a duty.' It is fitting to end the book with Seferis' advice for thinking about the future. Smyrna was Seferis' birthplace and scene of some of his happiest memories, and its destruction in 1922 affected him deeply. Nevertheless he wrote: 'The Greeks say it was the Turks who burned down Smyrna, the Turks say it was the Greeks. Who will discover the truth? The wrong has been committed. The important thing is: who will redeem it?'⁷

Chronology

Fourth Crusade takes Constantinople	1204
Latin Byzantine Empire	1204–61
Venetian rule in Cyclades begins	1205
Venetian rule established in Crete	1211
Mistrás established as seat of government in the Peloponnese	1249
Byzantines defeat Villehardouin, ruler of the Peloponnese, at Pelagonia	1259
Aléxios Kallériyis leads Cretan revolt against the Venetians	1282–99
Genoese rule begins in Chíos	1346
Edirne becomes capital of Ottoman Empire	1361
Turks defeated by Tamerlane at Ankara	1402
Turkish possession of Thessalonika finally established	1430
Agreement at Council of Florence to unify the Catholic and Orthodox Churches	1439
Sultanate of Mehmed II, the Conqueror	1444–6 and 1451–81
Constantine XI crowned as last Byzantine Emperor	1449
Constantinople falls to the Turks (May)	1453
Yennádhios becomes patriarch	1454
Almost all the Peloponnese under Turkish rule	1460
Venetian rule in Cyprus begins	1489
Jews expelled from Spain settle in Ottoman Empire	1492
Turks take Barbary coast from Spain	1510–16
Sultanate of Suleyman I, the Lawgiver or the Magnificent	1520–66
Turks take Rhodes from the Knights of St John	1522
Barbarossa becomes Turkish kapitan pasha	1533
Turkish rule in Cyclades established by fleet under Barbarossa	1537–8
El Greco born in Iráklion, died in Toledo in 1614	1541
Turks fail to take Malta from the Knights of St John	1565
Turks take Chíos	1566
Turkish capture of Cyprus	1570–1
Turks defeated by Holy League at naval battle of Lepanto	1571
Elizabeth I of England grants charter to the Turkey (later Levant) Company	1581
Janissary revolt over payment in debased coinage	1589
Interrupted patriarchates of Kírillos I Loukárís	1620–38
Turks capture Crete after prolonged siege of Iráklion	1645–69
Members of Koprulu family hold office of grand vizier	1656–83 and 1689–

	1708
Spon and Wheler travel in Greece	1675–6
Last and unsuccessful Turkish siege of Vienna	1683
Venetian forces, as part of new Holy League, land in Greece	1684
Venetian shell wrecks the Parthenon	1687
Voltaire born, died in 1778	1694
Treaty of Karlowitz ends war between Turks and Holy League	1699
Greek resistance to devshirme at Náousa	1705
Turks expel Venetians from mainland Greece	1715
Adhamántios Koraís born, died in 1833	1748
<i>Encyclopédie</i> summarising Enlightenment thinking published	1751–72
Rígas Pheréos born, died in 1798	1757
Catherine the Great becomes Empress of Russia	1762
Richard Chandler travels in Greece	1765–6
Russian–Turkish war, ended by Treaty of Kutchuk-Kainardji	1768–74
Orlov revolt in the Peloponnese	1770
Turks finally drive Albanian irregulars from the Peloponnese	1779
Greek ships allowed to sail under Russian flag, extending their trading area	1783
French Revolution and Declaration of the Rights of Man	1789
Greek newspaper <i>Ephimerís</i> (Daily) first published in Vienna	1790
Elgin removes Parthenon Marbles	1802
Turks expel klephts from the Peloponnese	1806
Greek periodical <i>Lóyios Ermís</i> (Literary Mercury) first published in Vienna	1811
Philikí Etería founded in Odessa	1814
Start of Greek war of independence (March)	1821
First provisional national government of Greece established (January)	1822
Greek forces under Kolokotrónis defeat Turkish army near Argos (August)	1822
Ibrahim invades the Peloponnese (February)	1825
Turks take Mesolongi (April)	1826
Ottoman fleet destroyed at Navarino (October)	1827
Kapodhístrias, first president of Greece, assassinated (October)	1831
Otho of Bavaria arrives as first King of independent Greece	1833
Iánnis Koléttis proclaims <i>Megáli Idhéa</i> (Great Idea)	1844
British take over government of Cyprus from the Turks	1878
Unsuccessful Greek invasion of Turkey	1919–22
Smyrna destroyed by fire	1922
Lausanne Treaty on exchange of populations	1923

Notes

Prologue: The Greek View of Turkish Rule (pp. 1–8)

- 1 Vasdravellis, *Klephts, Armatoles and Pirates*, pp. 123–6
- 2 James Creagh, *Over the Borders of Christendom and Eslamiah*, London, 1876, pp. 124–5, quoted in Wheatcroft, *Infidels*, p. 227

Chapter 1: Greece Before the Turks (pp. 9–19)

For the Fourth Crusade see Jonathan Phillips' and Michael Angold's books of that title, which supplement the material in Steven Runciman's *A History of the Crusades*. For an account of the following centuries see Peter Lock, *The Franks in the Aegean*. Harold Lurier, *Crusaders as Conquerors, The Chronicle of Morea* is the most accessible translation of the chronicle, and Lurier's introduction and notes are indispensable. Denis Zakythinos, *Le Despotat grec de Morée* deals mainly with the later part of the period. For the operation of the feudal system in Greece see Peter Topping, *Feudal Institutions as Revealed in the Assizes of Romania*.

- 1 Phillips, p. 5
- 2 Phillips, p. 62
- 3 Robert de Clari, quoted in Kelly, *Istanbul*, p. 123
- 4 Runciman, *Crusades*, vol. III, p. 130
- 5 Lurier in *Chronicle*, p. 5
- 6 *Chronicle*, pp. 115–17
- 7 *Chronicle*, pp. 67, 106
- 8 *Chronicle*, p. 156
- 9 *Chronicle*, p. 158
- 10 Zakythinos, p. 37
- 11 Quoted in Topping, p. 8
- 12 *Chronicle*, p. 158
- 13 *Chronicle*, p. 190
- 14 *Chronicle*, p. 194
- 15 *Chronicle*, pp. 177–8
- 16 *Chronicle*, p. 178
- 17 Lock, p. 111
- 18 Zakythinos, p. 71
- 19 Lock, p. 113
- 20 Lock, pp. 5–6

Chapter 2: 1453 – The Fall of Constantinople (pp. 20–33)

The main eyewitness and contemporary accounts are in J.R.M. Jones' translations in *The Siege of Constantinople, 1453: Seven Contemporary Accounts*; and Nicolo Barbaro, *Diary of the Siege of Constantinople* (same translator); and in Sphrantzís, *A Contemporary Greek Source for the Siege of Constantinople 1453: The Sphrantzes Chronicle* (translated, with a valuable commentary, by Margaret Carroll). Of the many books describing the siege Steven Runciman, *The Fall of Constantinople* is probably still the best factual account, but see also Roger Crowley, *Constantinople: The Last Great Siege*. For the Byzantine background see Donald M. Nicol, *The Immortal Emperor*; Judith Herrin, *Byzantium*; and A.A. Vasiliev *History of the Byzantine Empire*.

- 1 Dolfín in *Seven Accounts*, p. 126
- 2 Vasiliev, pp. 678–9
- 3 Leonard of Chíos in *Seven Accounts*, p. 29
- 4 Ducas in *Seven Accounts*, p. 77
- 5 Barbaro, p. 11
- 6 Barbaro, p. 25
- 7 Tedaldi in *Seven Accounts*, p. 3
- 8 Leonard of Chíos in *Seven Accounts*, p. 15
- 9 Leonard of Chíos in *Seven Accounts*, p. 26
- 10 Ducas in *Seven Accounts*, p. 87
- 11 Barbaro, p. 33
- 12 Sphrantzís, p. 56
- 13 Barbaro, p. 45
- 14 Vasiliev, p. 650
- 15 Ducas in *Seven Accounts*, p. 91
- 16 Leonard of Chíos in *Seven Accounts*, p. 33
- 17 Edward Pears (1903) quoted in Vasiliev, p. 652
- 18 Ducas in *Seven Accounts*, p. 111
- 19 Ducas in *Seven Accounts*, pp. 98–9
- 20 Ducas in *Seven Accounts*, p. 103
- 21 Barbaro, p. 61
- 22 Leonard of Chíos in *Seven Accounts*, p. 25
- 23 Leonard of Chíos in *Seven Accounts*, p. 40

Chapter 3: Sultans and Patriarchs (pp. 34–43)

Martin Crusius' history, his *Turcograecia*, was first published in Basel in 1584, and a facsimile of this original was produced in Modena in 1972. In this edition the original Greek and Crusius' Latin translation are printed in parallel, and Crusius' copious and valuable Annotations are included. However it is not easy to read as the Greek is somewhat crabbed and the Latin

is full of abbreviations. A clean parallel Greek and Latin text, edited by Niebuhr, was published in Bonn in 1849, but without the Annotations. References are to Crusius, *Turcograecia* and to Crusius, ed. Niebuhr respectively.

The complete works of Yennádhios, in eight volumes, were first published in Paris in 1935, with an invaluable commentary in French. See also the relevant chapters of Papadopoulos, *The Greek Church and People*; Vacalopoulos, *The Greek Nation*; and Runciman, *The Great Church in Captivity*.

For dates of patriarchates see endnotes to Chapter 10.

- 1 Sathas, *Tourkokratouméne Ellás* (Greece Under Turkish Rule), Athens, 1896, p. 1
- 2 Koran, ch. II, section 59, in e.g. *The Koran*, ed. Palmer, Oxford, 1900
- 3 Arnakis essay, *The Greek Church of Constantinople and the Ottoman Empire*, p. 240
- 4 Finkel, *Osman's Dream*, p. 11
- 5 Yennádhios, vol. VIII, App. V, pp. 27–8
- 6 Yennádhios, vol. IV, p. 407
- 7 Runciman, *Great Church*, p. 169
- 8 Yennádhios, vol. IV, p. 265
- 9 Yennádhios, vol. IV, p. 232
- 10 Yennádhios, vol. VIII, App. V, p. 31, n. 3
- 11 Yennádhios, vol. VIII, App. V p. 33
- 12 Yennádhios, vol. IV, pp. 381–2. The acrostic reads ‘Scholaríou péphike pan chirón pónos’.
- 13 Yennádhios, vol. III, p. 23
- 14 Yennádhios, vol. IV, p. 415
- 15 Karóuzos, *Martínos Kroúsios*, p. 35
- 16 Crusius, ed. Niebuhr, p. 115
- 17 Papadopoulos, p. 133
- 18 Runciman, *Great Church*, p. 187
- 19 Crusius, ed. Niebuhr, pp. 158–69
- 20 Vacalopoulos, *The Greek Nation*, p. 330, n. 36
- 21 Crusius, *Turcograecia*, p. 487

Chapter 4: The Greek Peasants (pp. 44–52)

Detailed descriptions of the Turkish systems of landholding and taxation are in Inalcik and Quataert, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*, vol. I; and in Gibb and Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West*. There is a useful summary in McGrew, *Land and Revolution in Modern Greece*, chapter 2, which also describes the Greek peasant's way of life under Turkish

rule. For the devshirme see Vasdravellis, *Klephts, Armatoles and Pirates in Macedonia*.

- 1 Spencer, *Fair Greece Sad Relic*, pp. 70, 56
- 2 Spencer, *Fair Greece Sad Relic*, p. 63. Lithgow was using ‘fastidious’ in its original sense of something evoking disgust rather than of a person who easily feels it.
- 3 Mahaffy, *Rambles and Studies in Greece*, quoted in Anderson, *The Smile of Apollo*, London, 1964, p. 188
- 4 McGrew, p. 5
- 5 Vasdravellis, p. 17
- 6 Finlay, *History of the Greek Revolution*, vol. I, p. 340
- 7 Gibb and Bowen, vol. II, p. 210
- 8 Crusius, *Turcograecia*, pp. 193–4
- 9 Vasdravellis, p. 114
- 10 Crusius, *Turcograecia*, p. 194

Chapter 5: The Italians in the Aegean (pp. 53–65)

The main sources are, for Chíos, Philip Argenti, *The Occupation of Chios by the Genoese and Chius Vincta*; and for the Cyclades, B.J. Slot, *Archipelagus Turbatus*. See also Peter Lock, *The Franks in the Aegean, 1204–1500*; and Apostolos Vacalopoulos, *The Greek Nation, 1453–1669*.

- 1 Argenti, *Occupation*, pp. 99–100
- 2 Thomas Gordon, *History of the Greek Revolution*, vol. I, p. 351
- 3 Argenti, *Chius Vincta*, p. xliv, n. 3
- 4 Argenti, *Chius Vincta*, p. ci
- 5 ‘In a word, the views of the Greek leaders overrode the wishes of the Turkish authorities on every issue’, Argenti, *Chius Vincta*, p. cxci
- 6 Randolph, *The Present State of the Islands*, p. 46
- 7 Randolph, *The Present State of the Islands*, p. 14
- 8 Slot, p. 22 (joke); Vacalopoulos, p. 90 (coercion); Carola Matthews, *At the Top of the Muletrack*, London, 1971, pp. 105–6 (pride)
- 9 Finkel, *Osman’s Dream*, p. 166, who points out that Nur Banu may in fact have been a Greek girl from Corfu – which would disappoint the genealogists.
- 10 Slot, p. 78
- 11 Slot, p. 77

Chapter 6: Pirates and Slaves (pp. 66–76)

For piracy in general see Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean*, especially vol. II, chapter 7; and Nicholas Rodger, *The Safeguard of the Sea*. Both praise Godfrey Fisher's *The Barbary Legend* – 'excellent book' (Braudel), 'an exuberant defence of the Barbary corsairs' (Rodger) – so Fisher was no mere revisionist maverick. For Spain see J.H. Elliott, *Imperial Spain*, for Venice Alberto Tenenti, *Piracy and the Decline of Venice*, and for Greek piracy Vasdravellis, *Klephts, Armatoles and Pirates*.

For slaves see Braudel and Fisher as above, plus Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age*; Inalcik and Quataert, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*; Faroqhi, *Subjects of the Sultan*; Vacalopoulos, *The Greek Nation*; and Finlay, *Greece Under Othoman and Venetian Occupation*.

- 1 Elliott, p. 53
- 2 Fisher, p. 33
- 3 Fisher, p. 55
- 4 Fisher, p. 9
- 5 Fisher, p. 10
- 6 Fisher, p. 62
- 7 Fisher, p. 149
- 8 Tenenti, p. 108
- 9 Braudel, p. 871
- 10 Vasdravellis, p. 178
- 11 Vasdravellis, p. 156
- 12 Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age*, p. 84
- 13 Grosrichard, *The Sultan's Court*, p. 64
- 14 Vacalopoulos, *The Greek Nation*, pp. 94–6
- 15 Slot, *Archipelagus Turbatus*, p. 45
- 16 Busbecq, *Turkish Letters*, pp. 44–5
- 17 Busbecq, *Turkish Letters*, p. 70
- 18 Vacalopoulos, *The Greek Nation*, p. 94, quoting Bartholomeus Georgieviz
- 19 Argenti, *The Occupation of Chios*, p. 622
- 20 Finlay, *Greece Under Othoman and Venetian Occupation*, pp. 61, 68, 69
- 21 Finlay, *Greece Under Othoman and Venetian Occupation*, pp. 64, 75

Chapter 7: The Fall of Cyprus (pp. 77–85)

The main source for Cyprus is George Hill, *A History of Cyprus*, vol. III. For the 1570 expedition of the combined fleet see also Hugh Bicheno, *Crescent and Cross*; and the lively (but unfortunately unreferenced) Jack Beeching, *The*

- 1 Hill, vol. III, p. 838 and n. 2
- 2 Hill, vol. III, p. 797
- 3 Hill, vol. III, p. 878, n. 3
- 4 Braudel, *The Mediterranean*, vol. II, p. 1074
- 5 Hill, vol. III, p. 884
- 6 Hill, vol. III, p. 888
- 7 Hill, vol. III, p. 889, n. 1. Some historians have confused the two votes and say that the ultimatum was rejected only by the narrow margin of 202 to 199.
- 8 Hill, vol. III, p. 897, n. 1
- 9 Bicheno, p. 197
- 10 Quoted in Hill, vol. III, p. 919
- 11 Hill, vol. III, p. 999, n. 1
- 12 Hill, vol. III, p. 1003
- 13 The story was included in Richard Knolles' enormously influential *Generall Historie of the Turks*, London, 1603, and two centuries later part of Byron's extensive reading about the Turks.

Chapter 8: 1571 – Lepanto (pp. 86–95)

As for Chapter 7, see Hill, Bicheno and Beeching. The tables and diagrams in Bicheno are particularly useful. The battle is also described in Andrew Wheatcroft, *Infidels*; and J.F.C. Fuller, *The Decisive Battles of the Western World*, London, 1954. Greek involvement is covered in I.K. Hasiótis, *I Éllines*, and *Metaxí Othomanikís Kiriarchías* (see Bibliography for details). The Turkish reaction to Lepanto is described in Halil Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire: Conquest, Organisation and Economy*, section IX.

- 1 Bicheno, p. 230
- 2 Bicheno, p. 231
- 3 Bicheno, p. 220
- 4 Bicheno, p. 268
- 5 Bicheno, pp. 277–8
- 6 Bicheno, pp. 306–7
- 7 Bicheno, p. 238
- 8 Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, part I, ch. 38
- 9 Finlay, *Greece Under Othoman and Venetian Occupation*, pp. 85–6
- 10 Hasiótis, *I Éllines*, p. 162
- 11 Hasiótis, *Metaxí*, pp. 217–18
- 12 Hasiótis, *I Éllines*, p. 14
- 13 This reading of Chesterton is in Wheatcroft, p. 33

- 14 Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire: Conquest, Organisation and Economy*, section IX, p. 190
- 15 Wheatcroft, p. 34
- 16 Bicheno, p. 285
- 17 Bicheno, p. 288
- 18 Norwich, *A History of Venice*, p. 489
- 19 Beeching, p. 246

Chapter 9: Mainland Greece and Town Life (pp. 96–106)

The Turkish system of administration is covered in Peter F. Sugar, *Southeastern Europe under Ottoman Rule*; Gibb and Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West*; Halil Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire: Conquest, Organisation and Economy*; and Apostolos Vacalopoulos, *The Greek Nation*. For Thessalonika see Mark Mazower, *Salonica: City of Ghosts*, and for Athens Kevin Andrews, *Athens Alive*, though Andrews' extracts from de la Guilletière should be read with caution – see text.

- 1 Sugar, p. xii
- 2 Gibb and Bowen, vol. I, p. 276
- 3 Iris Origo, *The Merchant of Prato*, London, 1957, pp. 62–5
- 4 Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire: Conquest, Organisation and Economy*, section X, p. 217
- 5 Vacalopoulos, *The Greek Nation*, p. 193
- 6 Gordon, *History of the Greek Revolution*, vol. I, p. 322
- 7 Mazower, *Salonica*, p. 28
- 8 Mazower, *Salonica*, pp. 48–51
- 9 Bernard Randolph in Molly Mackenzie, *Turkish Athens*, Reading, 1992, p. 37; de la Guilletière in Andrews, p. 80
- 10 George Wheler, in Andrews, p. 100
- 11 Andrews, p. 79 (de la Guilletière), p. 91 (Nointel), p. 101 (George Wheler)

Chapter 10: The Greek Church (pp. 107–18)

Of the mass of material on the Greek Orthodox Church, the main sources for this chapter are Steven Runciman, *The Great Church in Captivity*; Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church*; and T.H. Papadopoulos, *The Greek Church and People under Turkish Domination*. See also Apostolos Vacalopoulos, *The Greek Nation*, and *Istoria tou Ellinikou Éthnous (IEE)* (History of the Greek Nation), vols X and XI.

Chronological lists of the patriarchs are in *IEE*, vol. X, p. 102 for 1453–1671 and vol. XI, p. 129 for 1671–1821.

- 1 Runciman, *The Great Church*, p. 131
- 2 Runciman, *The Great Church*, p. 148
- Runciman, *The Great Church*, p. 60
- 4 Runciman, *The Great Church*, p. 59
- 5 Hasióti, *Metaxí*, p. 87
- 6 Vacalopoulos, *The Greek Nation*, pp. 152, 113, 111
- 7 Runciman, *The Great Church*, p. 209
- 8 Vacalopoulos, *The Greek Nation*, pp. 181–2
- 9 Clogg, *The Movement for Greek Independence*, pp. 79–80
- 10 Kapodhístrias, *Observations sur les Moyens d'Améliorer les Grecs* in G. Waddington, *A Visit to Greece in 1823 and 1824*, London, 1825, p. xxxix
- 11 Papadopoulos, p. 126
- 12 Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, p. 57
- 13 Runciman, *The Great Church*, p. 223
- 14 N. Michael Vapori, in ed. Costantelos, *Orthodox Theology and Diakonia*, Brookline, Massachusetts, 1981, p. 149
- 15 John Chryssavgis in *Encyclopedia of Greece*, Chicago and London, 2000, p. 1085
- 16 Runciman, *The Great Church*, p. 345
- 17 Vasiliev, *History of the Byzantine Empire*, vol. I, pp. 79–80
- 18 Panayiotákis, *Kríti*, vol. II, p. 448

Chapter 11: Venetian Crete (pp. 119–27)

The main sources for this chapter are Molly Greene, *A Shared World*; Chrísas Maltézos, *I Kríti sti Dhiárkia tis Períodhou tis Venetokratías* (Crete During the Period of Venetian Rule); Theocharis Detorakis, *History of Crete*; and N.M. Panayiotákis, ed., *Kríti: Istória kai Politismós* (Crete: History and Culture), vol. II, referred to as *Kríti* below. For El Greco see Xavier Bray, *El Greco*.

- 1 Maltézos, p. 46
- 2 The painting is in London's National Gallery, no. 6260, and a larger version is in Madrid's Escorial.
- 3 Roger Fry, quoted in Bray, p. 7
- 4 Bray, p. 42
- 5 Bray, p. 42
- 6 *Kríti*, vol. II, p. 168
- 7 *Kríti*, vol. II, p. 169
- 8 *Kríti*, vol. II, pp. 179–80
- 9 Detorakis, p. 196
- 10 Greene, p. 119
- 11 Greene, p. 63
- 12 Quoted in Robert Pashley, *Travels in Crete*, London, 1837, vol.

Chapter 12: 1669 – The Turks Take Crete (pp. 128–35)

The sources for this chapter are as for Chapter 11, plus S.J. and E.K. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*; Daniel Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe*; and John Stoye, *Europe Unfolding*. John Julius Norwich tells the story from the Venetian viewpoint in *A History of Venice*, chapters 42–4. The account of the surrender negotiations is in Harry Chionídhis, *Anglikón Ipómнима περί tis Poliorkías kai tis Ptóseos tou Chándakos* (English Account of the Siege and Fall of Iráklion).

- 1 Quoted in Greene, p. 17, n. 18
- 2 Norwich, p. 555
- 3 Chionídhis, p. 452
- 4 Chionídhis, pp. 455–6
- 5 Chionídhis, p. 483
- 6 Chionídhis, p. 496
- 7 D.O. Dapper, quoted in Michael Llewellyn Smith, *The Great Island*, p. 72
- 8 Greene, p. 81
- 9 J.P. de Tournefort, *Voyage d'un Botaniste*, vol. I, p. 54

Chapter 13: Turkish Rule in Cyprus and Crete (pp. 136–46)

For Cyprus see Halil Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire: Conquest, Organisation and Economy*, section VIII; George Hill, *A History of Cyprus*, vol. IV; and Stavros Pantelis, *The History of Modern Cyprus*. For Crete the main sources are as for Chapter 11, and Joseph Pitton de Tournefort, *Voyage d'un Botaniste*.

- 1 Hill, vol. IV, pp. 1–2
- 2 Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire: Conquest, Organisation and Economy*, section VIII, p. 7
- 3 Hill, vol. IV, p. 25
- 4 Hill, vol. IV, p. 34
- 5 Greene, p. 26, n. 48
- 6 Jane Hathaway, quoted in Greene, p. 20, n. 28
- 7 Detorakis, pp. 271–2
- 8 Richard Pococke, quoted in Greene, p. 91
- 9 Greene, p. 61
- 10 Tournefort, vol. I, p. 52

- 11 Tournefort, vol. I, p. 107
- 12 Tournefort, vol. I, p. 108
- 13 Tournefort, vol. I, p. 130
- 14 Quoted in, for example, Anthony Flew, *An Introduction to Western Philosophy*, London, 1971, p. 219, where the flaws in Pascal's argument are discussed.
- 15 Panayiotákis, vol. II, p. 440
- 16 Greene, p. 186
- 17 Herzfeld, *A Place in History*, p. 64
- 18 Clark, *Twice a Stranger*, pp. 185, 186

Chapter 14: The Changing Ottoman Empire (pp. 147–56)

All books on the Ottoman Empire, and many on the Mediterranean world in general, have something to say about perceived Ottoman decline. There are particularly illuminating insights in Daniel Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe*; Suraiya Faroqhi, *The Ottoman Empire and The World Around It*; and Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean*. For the Ottoman economy see Inalcik and Quataert, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*.

- 1 Goffman, p. 123
- 2 Braudel, vol. II, p. 1195
- 3 Imber, *The Ottoman Empire*, p. 110
- 4 Goffman, p. 117
- 5 Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire: Conquest, Organisation and Economy*, section XIII, pp.344–6
- 6 Faroqhi, p.44
- 7 Grosrichard, *The Sultan's Court*, Introduction, p. xxi
- 8 Grosrichard, *The Sultan's Court*, pp. 65–6
- 9 Grosrichard, *The Sultan's Court*, pp. 137–8
- 10 Inalcik and Quataert, *Economic and Social History*, vol. II, pp. 541–2
- 11 Braudel, vol. II, p. 840
- 12 McGowan, *Economic Life in Ottoman Europe*, p. 65
- 13 Gibb and Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West*, vol. I, p. 258

Chapter 15: Hunger and Disease (pp. 157–66)

For food crises see Kóstas Kostís, *Aphoría, Akrívia kai Pína* (Crop Failure, Cost of Living and Famine). The three outstanding studies of Greek rural life are Richard and Eva Blum, *Health and Healing in Rural Greece and The Dangerous Hour*; and John Campbell, *Honour, Family and Patronage*. For

malaria see W.H.S. Jones, *Malaria and Greek History*.

- 1 Vacalopoulos, *A History of Thessaloniki*, p. 106, n. 1
- 2 Mazower, *Salonika*, p.117
- 3 Jones, p. 115
- 4 Jones, p. 117
- 5 Jones, pp. 118–19
- 6 Papadopoulos, *The Greek Merchant Marine*, p. 340
- 7 Stoneman, ed., *A Literary Companion to Travel in Greece*, London, 1984, p. 243
- 8 Blum and Blum, *Dangerous Hour*, p. 353
- 9 Blum and Blum, *Dangerous Hour*, p. 48
- 10 Blum and Blum, *Dangerous Hour*, p. 129
- 11 Blum and Blum, *Dangerous Hour*, p. 157
- 12 Blum and Blum, *Dangerous Hour*, p. 168
- 13 Campbell, p. 322
- 14 Campbell, p. 347
- 15 Campbell, p. 331
- 16 Blum and Blum, *Dangerous Hour*, p. 378

Chapter 16: Travellers to Greece (pp. 167–83)

Two excellent surveys of the travellers to Greece are David Constantine, *Early Greek Travellers and the Hellenic Ideal*; and Olga Augustinos, *French Odysseys*. Also invaluable is Terence Spencer, *Fair Greece Sad Relic*. References to Lithgow are to *Rare Adventures and Painefull Peregrinations*, a version of his *Totall Discourse* edited and abridged by B.I. Lawrence, and for a biography of Lithgow see C.E. Bosworth, *An Intrepid Scot*. Richard Chandler's account is in the two volumes, published together in 1817 as *Travels in Asia Minor and Greece*, and Chandler references are to these two volumes unless specified as Chandler, ed. Clay.

- 1 Augustinos, pp. 54, 55
- 2 Augustinos, pp. 68, 69, 76
- 3 Lithgow, p. 17
- 4 Lithgow, p. 134
- 5 Lithgow, p. 197
- 6 Lithgow, p. 101
- 7 Lithgow, p. 75
- 8 Titus, i, 12, Corinthians I, vi, 9–10
- 9 Spencer, p. 12
- 10 Spencer, p. 10
- 11 Busbecq, *Turkish Letters*, 4th letter, p. 161
- 12 Busbecq, *Turkish Letters*, 3rd letter, p. 77

- 13 Spencer, p. 106
- 14 Constantine, p. 24
- 15 Spencer, p. 133, n. 2
- 16 Augustinos, p. 64
- 17 Constantine, p. 29
- 18 Constantine, p. 31
- 19 Spencer, p. 132
- 20 Constantine, p. 32
- 21 Augustinos, p. 108, Spencer, p. 136
- 22 Spencer, p. 135
- 23 Constantine, p. 222, n. 8
- 24 Spencer, pp. 78–9
- 25 Augustinos, p. 89
- 26 Augustinos, p. 121
- 27 Constantine, p. 188
- 28 Chandler, ed. Clay, *Travels in Asia Minor*, p. x
- 29 Chandler, ed. Clay, *Travels in Asia Minor*, p. 6
- 30 Chandler, *Asia Minor*, p. 59
- 31 Chandler, *Asia Minor*, p. 56
- 32 Chandler, *Asia Minor*, p. 149
- 33 Chandler, *Asia Minor*, p. 149
- 34 Chandler, *Asia Minor*, p. 328
- 35 Chandler, *Greece*, p. 8
- 36 Chandler, *Greece*, p. 11
- 37 Chandler, *Greece*, pp. 29–30
- 38 Chandler, *Greece*, p. 142
- 39 Chandler, *Greece*, p. 133
- 40 Chandler, *Greece*, p. 135
- 41 Chandler, *Greece*, p. 235
- 42 Chandler, *Greece*, p. 316
- 43 Chandler, *Greece*, p. 199
- 44 Chandler, *Greece*, p. 163
- 45 Chandler, *Greece*, p. 225
- 46 Chandler, *Greece*, p. 223
- 47 Chandler, *Greece*, p. 277
- 48 Chandler, *Greece*, p. 230
- 49 Chandler, *Greece*, p. 167
- 50 Chandler, *Greece*, p. 251
- 51 Chandler, *Greece*, p. 305
- 52 Chandler, *Greece*, p. 158
- 53 Chandler, *Greece*, p. 275

A detailed account of the Orlov revolt is in Gritsópoulos, *Ta Orlophiká* (The Orlov Revolt). For the background see Finkel, *Osman's Dream*; and Shaw and Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, vol. I. For travellers to Greece see Constantine, Augustinos and Spencer as for Chapter 16.

- 1 Gritsópoulos, pp. 41–2
- 2 Gritsópoulos, p. 58
- 3 Gritsópoulos, p. 52
- 4 Gritsópoulos, pp. 72, 81
- 5 Gritsópoulos, p. 99
- 6 Gritsópoulos, p. 117
- 7 Gritsópoulos, p. 122
- 8 Hasióitis, *Metaxí*, pp. 220–1
- 9 Gritsópoulos, p. 132
- 10 Gritsópoulos, p. 140
- 11 Gritsópoulos, p. 157
- 12 Gritsópoulos, p. 169
- 13 Spencer, p. 183
- 14 Constantine, p. 172
- 15 Spencer, p. 186
- 16 Constantine, p. 174
- 17 *Aeneid*, bk IV, l. 625
- 18 Augustinos, pp. 152, 153
- 19 Augustinos, p. 149
- 20 Augustinos, p. 156

Chapter 18: Greeks Abroad (pp. 196–208)

The main sources are Jonathan Harris, *Greek Emigrés in the West*; Chrístos Zaphíris, *Valkánios Pramatevtís* (Balkan Trader); and ed. Stelios A. Papadopoulos, *The Greek Merchant Marine*.

- 1 ‘Whatever subsidy their conscience dictated’, Harris, p. 191
- 2 Harris, p. 167
- 3 Zaphíris, p. 281
- 4 Zaphíris, p. 249
- 5 Zaphíris, p. 255
- 6 Vacalopoulos, *The Greek Nation*, p. 268
- 7 Vacalopoulos, *The Greek Nation*, p. 268
- 8 Papadopoulos, p. 60
- 9 Papadopoulos, p. 57
- 10 Papadopoulos, p. 56
- 11 Ogg, *Europe of the Ancien Regime*, London, 1965, p. 147

12 Papadopoulos, p. 99

13 Howe, *An Historical Sketch of the Greek Revolution*, p. 64

14 Papadopoulos, p. 389

Chapter 19: Greeks and the Enlightenment (pp. 209–24)

This chapter as a whole is much indebted to George P. Henderson, *The Revival of Greek Thought*. See also the books by K.T. Dhimarás and by Paschális M. Kitromilídis, both entitled *Neoellinikós Dhiaphotismós* (Greek Enlightenment); and L. Theocharides, *The Greek National Revival and the French Enlightenment*. Other works on Rígas and Koraís are C. Perrevós, *Síntomos Viographía tou Aidhímou Ríga Pheréou* (Short Biography of Rígas Pheréos of Blessed Memory); C.M. Woodhouse, *Rhigas Velesinilis*; and K. Notarás, *O Patriotikós Agónas tou Koráí* (The Patriotic Struggle of Koraís). For extracts from the writings of both Rígas and Koraís see R. Clogg, *The Movement for Greek Independence*.

1 Quoted in Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, Princeton, 1951, p. 251

2 Henderson, p. 52, n. 26

3 Henderson, p. 48

4 Henderson, p. 54

5 Henderson, p. 71

6 Theocharides, p. 41; Henderson, p. 96

7 Henderson, p. 92

8 Theocharides, p. 48

9 Henderson, p. 107

10 Henderson, p. 111

11 Henderson, pp. 102–3

12 Perrevós, p. 30; Woodhouse, *Rhigas Velesinilis*, p. 16

13 Woodhouse, *Rhigas Velesinilis*, p. 33

14 Clogg, *The Movement for Greek Independence*, pp. 149–50

15 Clogg, *The Movement for Greek Independence*, p. 157

16 Clogg, *The Movement for Greek Independence*, p. 155

17 Clogg, *The Movement for Greek Independence*, p. 157

18 Clogg, *The Movement for Greek Independence*, p. 160

19 Clogg, *The Movement for Greek Independence*, p. 162

20 Perrevós, pp. 13–15

21 Perrevós, pp. 16–17

22 Woodhouse, *Rhigas Velesinilis*, p. 110

23 Woodhouse, *Rhigas Velesinilis*, pp. 137–8

24 Perrevós, p. 28

25 Hobhouse, quoted in Marchand, *Byron: A Portrait*, London, 1971, p. 75

- 26 Dhimarás, p. 334
- 27 Kitromilídhis, pp. 253, 257–60
- 28 Kitromilídhis, p. 270
- 29 Clogg, *The Movement for Greek Independence*, p. 127
- 30 Kitromilídhis, p. 268
- 31 Notarás, pp. 26–7
- 32 Notarás, pp. 13–14
- 33 Clogg, *The Movement for Greek Independence*, pp. 129–30
- 34 Clogg, *The Movement for Greek Independence*, p. 130
- 35 Woodhouse, *Capodistria*, pp. 502–3

Chapter 20: The Enlightenment Attacked (pp. 225–34)

References to Voltaire's *Dictionnaire Philosophique* are to the translation by Theodore Besterman entitled *Philosophical Dictionary* – referred to below as *Dictionary*. Other references are as for Chapter 19.

- 1 *Dictionary*, p. 11
- 2 *Dictionary*, 'Religion', pp. 356–7
- 3 *Dictionary*, 'Théiste', p. 386
- 4 *Dictionary*, 'Morality', p. 322
- 5 *Dictionary*, 'Tyranny', p. 398
- 6 *Dictionary*, 'Laws', pp. 284–5
- 7 *Dictionary*, 'Tolerance', p. 387
- 8 *Dictionary*, 'Torture', p. 396
- 9 Augustinos, p. 136
- 10 Augustinos, p. 139
- 11 Augustinos, p. 140
- 12 Augustinos, p. 145
- 13 Augustinos, p. 60; Dhimarás, p. 150; Henderson, p. 74
- 14 Dhimarás, p. 157
- 15 Dhimarás, p. 162; Theocharides, pp. 229, 242
- 16 *IEE*, vol. XI, p. 132
- 17 Henderson, pp. 183–4
- 18 Dhimarás, p. 156
- 19 Clogg, *Movement for Greek Independence*, pp. 56–64
- 20 Notarás, p. 16
- 21 Clogg, *Movement for Greek Independence*, pp. 87–8
- 22 Clogg, *Movement for Greek Independence*, pp. 204–5
- 23 Romans, xiii, 1–2
- 24 Clogg, *Movement for Greek Independence*, p. 207
- 25 *Kolokotrones*, tr. Edmonds, London, 1892, p. 127

Chapter 21: Prelude to Revolution (pp. 235–45)

For the situation in Greece in the years before the revolution see H. Angelomatis-Tsougarakis, *The Eve of the Greek Revival*; and R. Clogg, *The Movement for Greek Independence*. The expulsion of the klephts in 1806 is covered in John Alexander, *Brigandage and Public Order in the Morea*, and the Philikí Etería in the contributions by George Frangos to R. Clogg, *The Struggle for Greek Independence*, and to *IEE*, vol. XI, pp. 424–32

- 1 Biddle, *Nicholas Biddle in Greece*, p. 161
- 2 Biddle, *Nicholas Biddle in Greece*, p. 232
- 3 Angelomatis-Tsougarakis, p. 150
- 4 Angelomatis-Tsougarakis, pp. 168–9
- 5 Angelomatis-Tsougarakis, p. 168
- 6 Clogg, *Movement for Greek Independence*, p. 183
- 7 Clogg, *Movement for Greek Independence*, p. 188
- 8 Clogg, *Movement for Greek Independence*, p. 192
- 9 Kolokotronis, p. 126
- 10 Gordon, *History of the Greek Revolution*, vol. I, p. 260
- 11 Photákos, *Víos tou Pápa Phléssa* (Life of Papaphléssas), Athens, 1868, p. 26
- 12 G. Yermanós, *Apomnimonévmata* (Memoirs), vol. III of *Apomnimonévmata ton Agonistón tou '21*, p. 81
- 13 Clogg, *Movement for Greek Independence*, p. 197
- 14 Finlay, *History of the Greek Revolution*, vol. VI, p. 141
- 15 Makriyánnis, p. 14

Chapter 22: 1821 – The War of Independence (pp. 246–55)

For an account of the war may I suggest my own book *The Flame of Freedom* (in the USA *The Greek War of Independence*), and its bibliography for other studies. In English the classic histories of the period by participants are by the acerbic George Finlay and by the more balanced Thomas Gordon, both works entitled *History of the Greek Revolution*. Also in English are the lively and perceptive firsthand accounts by Samuel Howe in *An Historical Sketch of the Greek Revolution* and in his *Letters and Journals*. For diplomacy see Webster, *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*; and Temperley, *The Foreign Policy of Canning*.

- 1 Pouqueville, *Histoire de la régénération de la Grèce*, 4 vols, Paris, 1825, vol. II, pp. 325–37
- 2 Gordon, vol. II, p. 305
- 3 Argenti, *The Massacres of Chios*, p. 26
- 4 Gordon, vol. I, p. 222

- 5 *Kolokotrones*, p. 254
- 6 Howe, *An Historical Sketch*, pp. 78–9
- 7 Trikoúpis, vol. III, pp. 34–5
- 8 Gordon, vol. II, p. 174
- 9 Howe, *Letters and Journals*, p. 90
- 10 Gordon, vol. II, p. 283
- 11 Gordon, vol. I, p. 183
- 12 Webster, p. 376
- 13 Temperley, p. 329
- 14 Temperley, p. 349
- 15 Woodhouse, *Navarino*, London, 1964, pp. 53–4

Chapter 23: One Man’s War – Nikólaos Kasomoúlis (pp. 256–67)

References to Kasomoúlis are to his two-volume *Enthimímata Stratiotiká* (Military Reminiscences), written in somewhat idiosyncratic Greek helpfully amended and annotated by Iánnis Vlachoyánnis. Karaïskákis’ trial is covered in detail, with a strong pro-Karaïskákis slant, in Ilías Papasteriópoulos, *I Dhíki tou Karaïskáki* (The Trial of Karaïskákis) referred to below as *Dhíki*.

- 1 Kasomoúlis, vol. I, p. 133
- 2 Kasomoúlis, vol. I, p. 160
- 3 Kasomoúlis, vol. I, p. 218
- 4 Kasomoúlis, vol. I, p. 203
- 5 Kasomoúlis, vol. I, p. 296
- 6 Kasomoúlis, vol. I, p. 341
- 7 Kasomoúlis, vol. I, p. 343
- 8 Kasomoúlis, vol. I, p. 393
- 9 Kasomoúlis, vol. I, p. 456
- 10 Kasomoúlis, vol. I, p. 455
- 11 Kasomoúlis, vol. I, p. 221
- 12 *Kolokotrones*, p. 141
- 13 Kasomoúlis, vol. I, p. 265
- 14 Kasomoúlis, vol. I, p. 363
- 15 Kasomoúlis, vol. I, p. 448
- 16 *Dhíki*, pp. 71–2
- 17 Kasomoúlis, vol. I, p. 383
- 18 Kasomoúlis, vol. I, p. 387
- 19 Kasomoúlis, vol. II, p. 94
- 20 Kasomoúlis, vol. II, p. 192
- 21 Kasomoúlis, vol. II, p. 249
- 22 Kasomoúlis, vol. II, p. 243
- 23 Kasomoúlis, vol. II, p. 270 and n. 8
- 24 Kasomoúlis, vol. II, pp. 289–90

Chapter 24: Some Conclusions (pp. 268–74)

For Seferis see the excellent biography by Roderick Beaton, *George Seferis*. The Anglicised form of his name was used by Seferis himself and is adopted here. Other quotations of Seferis are from the periodical *Agenda* of winter 1969 and Philip Sherrard, *The Wound of Greece*.

¹ Cartledge, pp. 12–13

² *Kolokotrones*, tr. Edmonds, p. 139

³ Sherrard, p. 97

⁴ Beaton, p. 276

⁵ Leigh Fermor, pp. 103, 100

⁶ *Agenda*, p. 54

⁷ Sherrard, p. 112

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- Europe*, New York, 2002.
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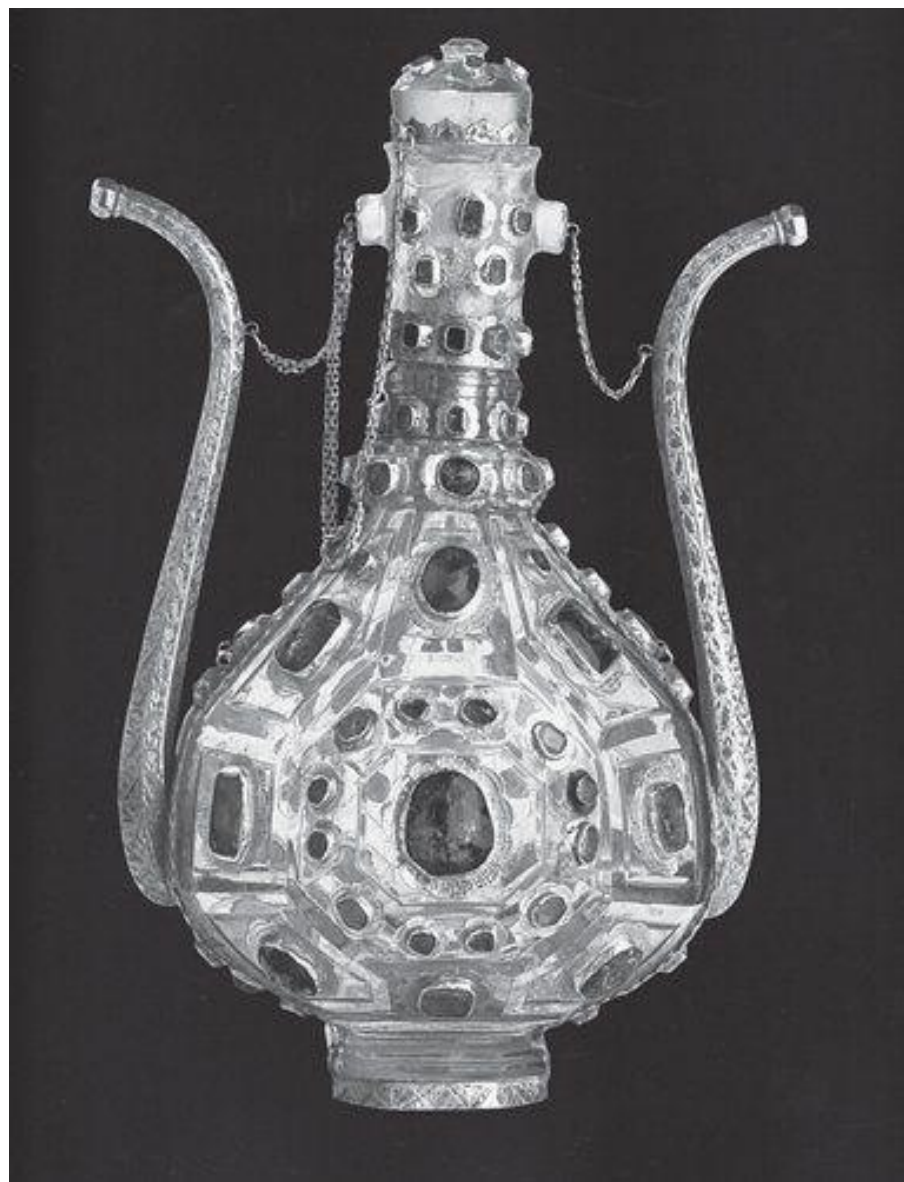
Plates



1 Sultan Mehmed II (ruled 1451–81), the conqueror of Constantinople, and Yennádhios Scholários, the first Greek patriarch under Turkish rule. Their discussions were amicable and wide ranging.



2 Sultan Suleyman I (ruled 1520–66), known as ‘the Magnificent’ or ‘the Lawgiver’, school of Titian, c.1530–40, In Suleyman’s reign Ottoman power was at its height.



3 Turkish high art. A late-sixteenth-century flask of rock crystal, gold, emerald and ruby.



4 By contrast, Turkish torture by bastinado (beating the soles of the feet), from a late-sixteenth-century Austrian illuminated manuscript.



5 Boys conscripted by the devshirme, or child-collection, being paraded in their new uniforms. Also Austrian, late sixteenth century.



6 'Greece – The Wounded Patriot', by F.P. Stephanoff: a scene from the war of independence.

The palm trees in the background suggest that the Greeks are resisting Ibrahim's 1825 invasion from Egypt. One foreground object is a Bible, and the picture encapsulates the three sources of Greek inspiration – family, religion and fighting spirit.

Dressed to kill



7 A Cretan warrior of Sphakiá from the Venetian period.



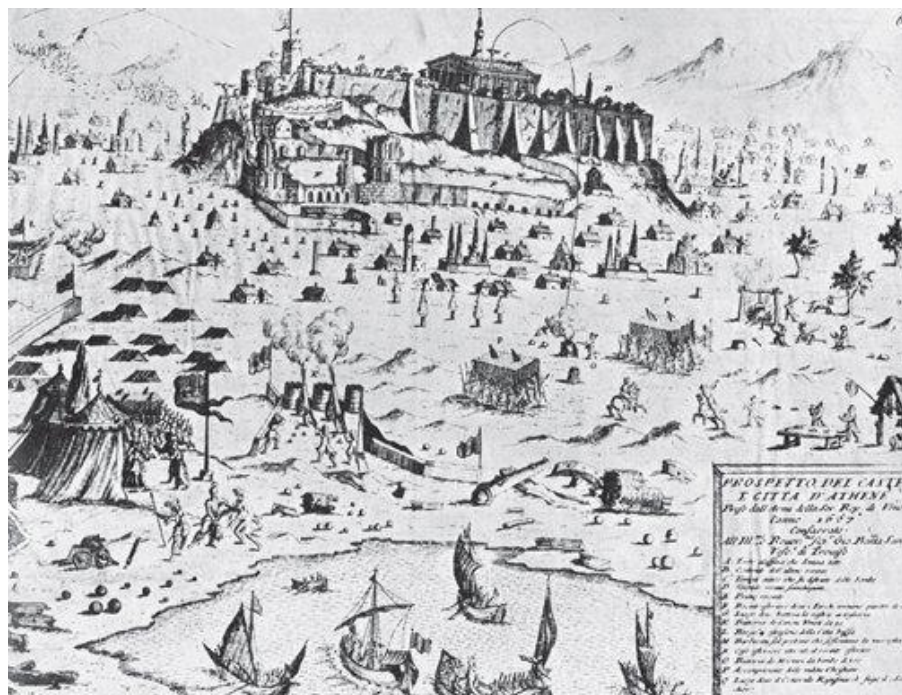
A COLONEL OF THE JANISSARIES.

London: Published by Wm. Groom, 25, Colquhoun Street, 1857.

8 A janissary colonel of the early nineteenth century.



9 Nikólaos Gíziis, 'Education in the Time of Slavery', showing the supposedly secret school, with an armed guard in the shadows on the right.



10 The Venetian mortar shell that wrecked the Parthenon in 1687.



11 A watchful Greek shipmaster and



12 his somnolent crew, early nineteenth century.



13 A girl of Chíos, by George Rumpf, dated c.1768–9. Travellers often commented on the striking dress and saucy manner of the Chíos girls.

TURQUIE.

*Femme de Naxos.*

14 By contrast, a rather more sedate girl of Náxos.

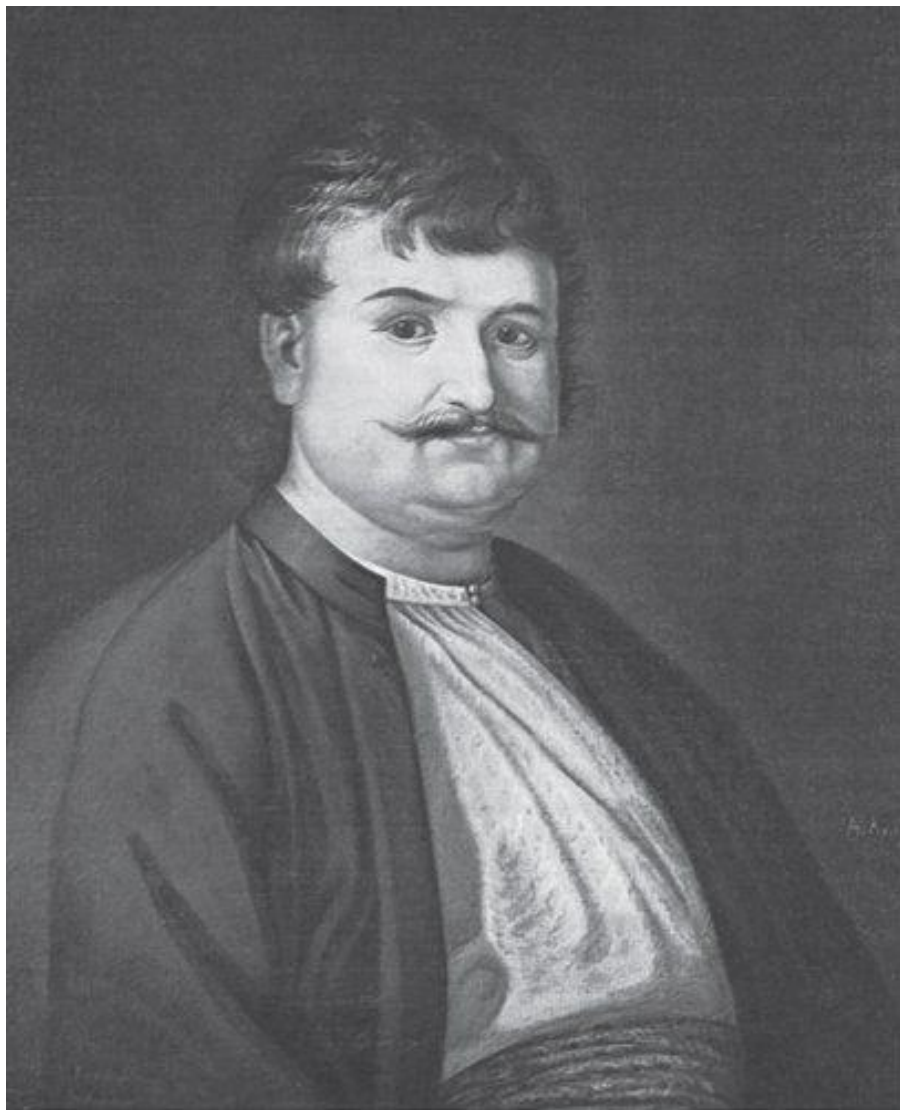


16 The importance of going to church. The priest on the tower beats the wooden *sūmantron* to summon the faithful, while devils beguile those who stay in bed. Early nineteenth-century wall painting from a village church in Pílion.



17 A Balkan brigand, armed to the teeth, by Carl Haag.

Two prophets of revolution



18 Rígas Pheréos.



19 Adhamántios Koraís.



20 Greece as a destitute and oppressed maiden, standing beside a ruined statue of Homer. An illustration from Koraís' work *Trumpet Call to War* – though Koraís thought the war of independence was premature.

Dramatisation of the war of independence, then and later.



21 A The bereaved mother prepares to commit suicide at the fall of Mesolongi (de Lansac, 1828).



22 Angels in brigand dress attend the birth of Kolokotrónis (Thémis Tsirónis, 1986).

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